

5
THE
REFUSAL;

OR,

The Ladies Philosophy.

A
COMEDY.

As it is Acted at the THEATRE-ROYAL in
SMOCK-ALLEY.

By COLLEY CIBBER, *Esq;*

Amor omnibus idem.

VIRG.



DUBLIN:

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Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

London.

Dublin.

Sir G. WRANGLE.	Mr. Penkethman.	Mr. Macklin.
GRANGER.	Mr. Booth.	Mr. Moore.
FRANKLEY.	Mr. Wilks.	Mr. Dyer.
WITTLING.	Mr. Gibber.	Mr. Kennedy.

W O M E N.

Lady WRANGLE.	Mrs. Bicknell.	Mrs. Macklin.
SOPHRONIA.	Mrs. Oldfield.	Mrs. Vincent.
CHARLOTTE.	Mrs. Booth.	Mrs. Bland.

Servants, &c.

P R O L O G U E

Spoken by the AUTHOR.

GALLANTS! behold before your Eyes the Wight,
 Whose Actions stand accountable To-night,
 For all your Dividends of Profit or Delight.
 New Plays resemble Bubbles, we must own,
 But their intrinsick Value soon is known;
 There's no imposing Pleasure on a Town.
 And when they fail, count o'er his Pains and Trouble,
 His Doubts, his Fears, the Poet is the Bubble.

As Poets by the Tragick Muse are sung,
 So to the Comick, Knaves and Fools belong:
 Follies, To-night, of various Kinds we paint,
 One, in a Female Philosophick Saint,
 That would by Learning Nature's Laws repeal,
 Warm all her Sex's Bosoms to rebel,
 And only with Platonick Raptures swell.
 Long she resists the proper Use of Beauty,
 But Flesh and Blood reduce the Dame to Duty.
 A Coxcomb too of modern Stamp we show,
 A Wit—but impudent—a South-sea Beau.
 Nay more—our Muse's Fire (but pray protect her)
 Roasts, to your Taste, a whole South-sea Director.
 But let none think we bring him here in spite,
 For all their Actions, sure, will bear the Light;
 Besides, he's painted here in Height of Power,
 Long ere we laid such Ruin at his Door:
 When he was lew'd, like a Statesman, by the Town,
 And thought his heap'd-up Millions all his own.
 No, no; Stock's always at a Thousand here,
 He'll almost honest on the Stage appear.

Such is our Fare, to feed the Mind our Aim;
 But Poets stand, like Warriors, in their Fame;
 One ill Day's Work brings all their past to Shame.
 Thus having tasted of your former Favour,
 The Chance seems now for deeper Stakes than ever.
 As after Runs of Luck, we're more accurst,
 To lose our Winnings, than have lost at first;
 A first Stake lost has often saw'd from Ruin,
 But on one Cast to lose the Tout—is hard Undoing.
 But be it as it may—the Dye is thrown,
 Fear now were Folly—pass the Rubicon.

EPI.

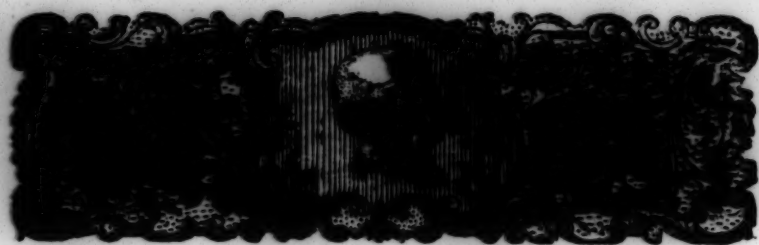
E P I L O G U E,

THE Time is come the Roman Bard foretold,
*A Brazen Year succeeds an Age of Gold;
 An Age——*

*When specious Books were open'd for undoing,
 And English Hands, in Crouds, subscrib'd their Ruin.
 Some Months ago, who ever could suppose,
 A Goose-quill Race of Rulers should have rose,
 T'have made the warlike Britons groan beneath their
 Blows.*

*Evils, that newer yet beheld the Sun,
 To foreign Arms, or civil Fars unknown,
 Those trembling Miscreants, by their Wiles, have done.
 Thus the fierce Lion, whom no Force could foil,
 By Village-Curs is baited in the Toil.
 Forgive the Muse then, if her Scenes were laid
 Before your fair Possessions were betray'd;
 She took the sitting Form, as Fame then ran,
 While a Director seem'd an honest Man:
 But were she from his present Form to take him,
 What a huge gorging Monster must she make him?
 How would his Paunch with Golden Ruin swell?
 Whole Families devouring at a Meal?
 What motley Humour in a Scene might flow,
 Were we these Upstarts in their Airs to show?
 When their high Betters at their Gates have waited,
 And all to beg the Favour to be cheated;
 Even that Favour, (or they're by Fame bely'd)
 To raise the Value of the Cheat, deny'd.
 And while Sir John was airing on his Prancers,
 He's left his Cookmaid to give Peers their Answers.
 Then Clerks in Berlins, purchas'd by their Cheats,
 That splash their walking Betters in the Streets.
 And while, by Fraud, their native Country's sold,
 Cry, Drive, you Dog, and give your Horses Gold:
 Even Jews no Bounds of Luxury refrain,
 But boil their Christian Hams in pure Champaign.
 Till then the Guilty, that have caus'd these Times,
 Feel a superior Censure for their Crimes;
 Let all, whose Wrongs the Face of Wrongs can bear,
 Enjoy the Muse's Vengeance on them here.*

THE



THE
REFUSAL;
OR,
The Ladies Philosophy.

ACT I.

The SCENE, Westminster-Hall.

Frankley and Granger meeting.

Frank. IS it possible!

Gran. Frankley?

Fran. Dear *Granger*! I did not expect you these ten Days: How came you to be so much better than your Word?

Gran. Why, to tell you the Truth, because I began to think *London* better than *Paris*.

Fran. That's strange: But you never think like other People.

Gran. I am more apt to speak what I think, than
A 2 other

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other People : Though I confess *Paris* has its Charms ; but to me they are like those of a Coquette, gay and gawdy ; they serve to amuse with, but a Man would not chuse to be marry'd to them. In short, I am to pass my Days in *Old England*, and am therefore resolv'd not to have an ill Opinion of it.

Fran. These settled Thoughts, *Ned*, make me hope, that if ever you *should* marry, you will be as partial to to the *Woman* you intend to pass your Days with.

Gran. Faith ! I think every Man's a Fool that is not : But it's very odd ; you see, the grossest Fools have generally Sense enough to be fond of a fine House, or a good Horse, when they have bought them : They can see the Value of them, at least ; and why a poor Wife should not have as fair Play for one's Inclination, I can see no Reason, but downright Ill-nature or Stupidity.

Fran. What do you think of Avarice ? when People purchase Wives, as they do other Goods, only because they are a Penny-worth : Then too a Woman has a fine time on't !

Gran. Ay, but that will never be the Case of my Wife : When I marry, I'll do it with the same convenient Views as a Man would set up a Coach, because his Estate will bear it, it's easy, and keeps him out of dirty Company.

Fran. But what ! would you have a Wife have no more Charms than a Chariot ?

Gran. Ah ! Friend, if I can but pass as many easy Hours at home with one, as abroad in t'other, I will take my Chance, for her Works of Supererogation ; and I believe at worst, should be upon a *Par* with the Happiness of most Husbands about Town.

Fran. But, at this rate, you would marry before you are in love.

Gran. Why not ? Do you think Happiness is entail'd upon marrying the Woman you love ? No more than Reward is upon publick Merit : It may give you a Title to it indeed ; but you must depend upon other People's Virtue to find your Account in either. For my part, I am not for building Castles in the Air ; when I marry, I expect no great matters ; none of your Angels, a mortal Woman will do my Business, as
you'll

you'll find, when I tell you my Choice. All I desire of a Wife, is, that she will do as she is bid, and keep herself clean.

Fra. Would you not have her a Companion tho', as well as a Bedfellow?

Gran. You mean, I suppose, a Woman of Sense?

Fran. I should not think it amiss for a Man of Sense.

Gran. Nor I; but 'Sdeath where shall I find her? In short, I am tired with the Search, and will ev'n take up with one, as Nature has made her, handsome, and only a Fool of her own making.

Fran. Was ever so desperate an Indifference? I am impatient till I know her.

Gran. Even the sage and haughty Prude, *Sophronia*.

Fran. *Sophronia*! I hope you don't take her for a Fool, Sir; why, she thinks she has more Sense than all her Sex together.

Gran. You don't tell me that as a Proof of her Wit, I presume, Sir.

Fran. No: But I think your Humour's a little extraordinary, that can resolve to marry the Woman you laugh at.

Gran. It's, at least, a Sign I am in no great Danger of her laughing at me, *Tom*; the Case of many a prettier Fellow. But I take *Sophronia* to be only a Fool of Parts, that's however capable of thinking right; and a Man must be nice indeed, that turns up his Nose at a Woman, who has no worse Imperfection, than setting too great a Value upon her Understanding. I grant it, she is half mad with her Learning and Philosophy: What then? so are most of our Great Men, when they get a little too much on't. Nay, she is so rapt in the Pride of her imaginary Knowledge, that she almost forgets she is a Woman, and thinks all Offers of Love to her Person a Dishonour to the Dignity of her Soul; but all this does not discourage me: She may fancy herself as wise as she pleases; but unless I fail in my Measures, I shall think I have hard luck, if I don't make that fine Flesh and Blood of her's, as troublesome as my own in a Fornight.

Fran. You must have better luck than I had then!

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I was her Fool for above five Months together, and did not come ill recommended to the Family; but could make no more Impression than upon a Vestal Virgin: And how a Man of your cool Reflection can think of attempting her, I have no Notion.

Gran. Pshah! I laugh at all her Airs; a Woman of a general Insensibility, is only one that has never been rightly attack'd.

Fran. Are you then really resolv'd to pursue her?

Gran. Why not? Is not she a fine Creature? Has not she Parts? Would not half her Knowledge, equally divided, make fifty Coquettes all Women of Sense? Is not her Beauty natural, her Person lovely, her Mien majestick——Then such a Constitution——

Fran. Nay, she has a wholesome Look, I grant you: But then her Prudery, and *Platonick* Principles, are insupportable.

Gran. Now to me they are more diverting, than all the Levity of a Coquette: O! the noble Conflicts between Nature and a proud Understanding, make our Triumphs so infinitely above these petty Conquests—— Besides, are not you Philosopher enough to know, my Friend, that a Body continent holds most of the thing contain'd? 'Tis not your wasting Currents, but Reservoirs, that make the Fountain play; not the Prodigal's, but the Miser's Chest, that holds the Treasure: No, no, take my word, your Prude has thrice the latent Fire of a Coquette. Your Prude's a Flask hermetically seal'd, all's right within, depend upon't; but your Coquette's a mere Bottle of Plague-water, that's open to every body.

Fran. Well, Sir, since you seem so heartily in earnest, and, I see, are not to be disgusted at a little Female Frailty; I think I ought in Honour to let you into a little more of her: You must know then, this marble-hearted Lady, who could not bear my Addresses to herself, has notwithstanding Flesh and Blood enough to be ten times more uneasy, that I now pay them to her Sister.

Gran. I am glad to hear it: Prithee! let me know all; for 'tis upon these sort of Weaknesses, that I am to strengthen my Hopes.

Fran.

Fran. You know I writ you word, that I thought the safest way to cover my real Passion for her Sister *Charlotte*, would be, to drop my cold Pretensions to *Sophronia*, insensibly; upon which Account I rather heighten'd my Respect to her: But as, you know, 'tis harder to disguise a real Inclination, than to dissemble one we have not; *Sophronia*, it seems, has so far suspected the Cheat, that, since your Absence, she has broke into a thousand little Impatiencies at my new Happiness with *Charlotte*.

Gran. Good.

Fran. But the Jest is, she can't yet bring down her Vanity to believe I am in earnest with *Charlotte* neither; but really fancies my Addresses there, are all Grimace, the mere Malice of a rejected Lover, to give her Scorn a Jealousy.

Gran. Admirable! but I hope you are sure of this.

Fran. 'Tis but Yesterday she gave me a Proof of it.

Gran. Pray, let's hear.

Fran. Why, as *Charlotte* and I were whispering at one end of a Room, while we thought her wrapt up in one of *Horace's* Odes at the other,—of a sudden, I observ'd her come sailing up to me, with an insulting Smile, as who should say—I laugh at all these shallow Arts—then turn'd short, and, looking over her Shoulder, cry'd aloud—*Ah! Miser!*

Quantâ laboras in Charybdi?

Gran. *Digne Puer meliore Flammâ*—Ah! methinks, I see the imperious Hussey, in Profile, waving her snowy Neck into a thousand lovely Attitudes of Scorn and Triumph! O the dear Vanity! well, when all's said, the Coxcomb's vastly handsome!

Fran. I'gad! thou art the oddest Fellow in the World! to be thus capable of diverting yourself with your Mistress's Jealousy of another Man.

Gran. Pshaw! Thou'rt too refin'd a Lover; I am glad of any Occasion that proves her more a Woman, than she imagines.

Fran. But pray, Sir, upon what Foot did you stand with her before you went to *France*?

Gran. O! I never pretended to more, than a *Platonick*

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tonick Passion; I saw, at first View, she was inaccessible by Love.

Fran. Yet since you were resolv'd to pursue her, how came you to think of rambling to *Paris*?

Gran. Why, the last time I saw her, she grew so fantastically jealous of my regarding her more, as a Woman, than an intellectual Being, that my Patience was half tir'd; and having, at that time, an Appointment, with some idle Company, to make a Trip to *Paris*, I slyly took that Occasion, and told her, if I threw myself into a voluntary Banishment from her Person, I hoped she would then be convinc'd, I had no other Views of Happiness, than what her Letters might, ev'n in Absence, as well gratify, from the Charms of her Understanding.

Fran. Most solemnly impudent!

Gran. In short, her Vanity was so blind to the Banter, that she insisted upon my going, and made me conditional promises of answering all my Letters; in which I have flatter'd her romantick Folly to that degree, that, in her last, she confesses an entire Satisfaction in the *Innocent Dignity* of my Inclinations (as she styles it) and therefore thinks herself bound, in Gratitude, to recall me from Exile: which gracious Boon (being heartily tired at *Paris*) I am now arriv'd to accept of.

Fran. The merriest Amour that ever was! Well! and why don't you visit her?

Gran. O! I do all things by Rule—not till she has din'd; for our Great *English* Philosopher, my Lord Bacon, tells you, that then the Mind is generally most ductile.

Fran. Wisely considered.

Gran. Besides, I want to have a little Talk first with the old Gentleman her Father.

Fran. Sir Gilbert! If I don't mistake yonder he comes——

Gran. Where, prithee?

Fran. There, by the Bookseller's; don't you see him, with an odd Crowd after him.

Gran. O! now I have him——he's loaded with Papers like a Solicitor.

Fran.

Fran. Sir, he is at this time a Man of the first Consequence, and receives more Petitions every Hour than the Court of *Chancery* in a whole Term.

Gran. What! is he Lord Treasurer?

Fran. A much more considerable Person, I can assure you; he is a *South-Sea* Director, Sir:

Cran. O! I cry you Mercy! and those about him, I presume, are bowing for Subscriptions.

Fran. That's their Business, you may be sure; but see, at last, he has broke from them.

Gran. No! there's one has got him by the Sleeve again.

Fran. What if we should stand off, and observe a little.

Gran. With all my Heart.

Sir Gilb. [*To a Man at the Door.*] Prithee be quite, Fellow! I tell you I'll send the Duke an Answer to-morrow Morning.

Within.] It's very well, Sir——

Sir Gilbert speaks entering, with a great Parcel of open Letters in his Hand, and others stuffing his Pockets.

Sir Gilb. Very Well! ay, so it is, if he gets it then——Why? what! these People of Quality, sure, think they do you a Favour, when they ask one——Huh! let him come for it himself! I am sure I was forc'd to do so, at his House, when I came for my own, and could not get it neither——and he expects I should give him 2000 *l.* only for sending a Footman to me. Why? what! Does his Grace think I don't know which side my Bread's butter'd on? Let's see! who are these from?——

[*Reads to himself.*]

Gran. The old Gentleman's no blind Admirer of a Man of Quality, I see.

Fran. O! Sir, he has lately taken up a mortal Aversion to any Man that has a better Title than himself.

Gran. How so, pray?

Fran. As he grows rich, he grows proud; and, among Friends, had lately a mind to be made a Lord himself: But applying to the wrong Person, it seems, he was disappointed; and ever since piques himself upon despising any Nobleman, who is not as rich as himself.

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Gran. Hah! the right *Plebeian Spirit of Old-England*: But I think he's counted an honest Man.

Fran. Umph! yes! well enough——a good sort of mercantile Conscience; he is punctual in Bargains, and expects the same from others; he will neither steal, nor cheat, unless he thinks he has the Protection of the Law: Then indeed, as most thriving Men do, he thinks Honour and Equity are chimerical Notions.

Gran. That is, he bluntly professes what other People practise with more Breeding——but let's accost him.

Fran. Stay a little.

(*a Letter.*

Sir Gilb. To me, Friend! [*Enter a Footman with.*
What will they never have done?

Footm. Sir, my Lady *Double-Chin* presents her Service, and says she'll call for your Honour's Answer to-morrow Morning.

Sir Gilb. Very well; tell my Lady I'll take care to——

[*Exit Footman.*

Be exactly out of the way when she comes.

Gran. Hah! he'll keep that part of his word, I warrant him.

Sir Gilb. Let's see! the old Story, I suppose,
[*Reads.*] Um——Um——yes, yes——only two Thousand——Huh! Does the Woman take me for a Fool? Does she think I don't know that a Two Thousand Subscription is worth Two Thousand Guineas; and because she is not worth above Fourscore Thousand already, she would have me give them to her for Nothing——To a poor Relation, she pretends indeed, as if she loved any body better than herself! A Drum! and a Fiddle! I'll grease none of your fat Sows, not I——No, no, get you into the negative Pocket——Bless my Eyes! *Mr. Granger.*

Gran. *Sir Gilb.* I am your most humble Servant.

Sir Gilb. In troth, I am glad to see you in *England* again——*Mr. Frankley*, your humble Servant.

Fran. Sir, your most obedient.

Sir Gilb. Well, how goes *Mississippi*, Man? What! do they bring their Money by Waggon-Loads to Market still? Hah! Hah! hah! hah!

Gran.

The Ladies Philosophy.

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Gran. O! all gone, good for nothing, Sir, your *South-Sea* has brought it to waste Paper.

Sir Gilb. Why, ay, han't we done glorious things here? ha! we have found Work for the Coachmakers as well as they, Boy.

Gran. Ah, Sir, in a little time we shall reduce those, who kept them there, to their Original of riding behind them here.

Sir Gilb. Huh! huh! you will have your Joke still, I see—Well! you have not sold out, I hope.

Gran. Not I, faith, Sir; the old Five Thousand lies snug as it was: I don't see where one can move it, and mend it; so even let it lie, and breed by itself.

Sir Gilb. You're right—you're right—hark you—keep it—the thing will do more still, Boy.

Gran. Sir, I am sure it's in hands, that can make it do any thing.

Sir Gilb. Have you got any new Subscription?

Gran. You know, Sir, I have been absent, and it's really now grown so valuable a Favour, I have not the Confidence to ask it.

Sir Gilb. Pshah! prithee never talk of that, Man—

Gran. If I thought you were not full, Sir—

Sir Gilb. Why, if I were as full as a Bumper, Sir, I'll put my Friends in, let who will run over for't.

Fran. *Sir Gilb.* always doubles his Favours, by his Manner of doing them.

Sir Gilb. *Frankley*, you are down for 5000 *l.* already, and you may depend upon every Shilling of it—let me see, what have I done with my List? *Granger* has a good Estate, and had an Eye upon my eldest Daughter before he went to *France*; I must have him in, it may chance to bring the matter to bear. [*Aside.*]

Gran. Where did you get all these Letters, *Sir Gilbert*?

Sir Gilb. Why, ay, this is the Trade every Morning, all for Subscriptions: Nay, they are special Stuff—here, prithee, read that,

Fran. Who is it from, Sir?

Sir Gilb. O! a *North-Briton*, a bloody squabbling Fellow, who owes me a Thousand Pounds for Diffidence, and that's his way of paying me; read it.

Gran.

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Gran. [Reading.] Wuns, Sir, dee ye no tack me for a Man of Honor? Ye need no send to my Ludging so often for year pimping Thousand Pound. An ye'll be but civil a bit, Ise order the Bearer, my Brocker, to mack up year Ballance: and if ye wull but gea yearsell the Trouble to put his Name intull year own List for a Thousand Subscription, he'se pay ye aw down upo' the Nail: But an ye wo'no do this smaw Jub, the Deel Dommee, an ye e'er se a Grote from me, as long as my Name is

George Blunderbuss.

Fran. What can you do with such a Fellow, Sir?

Sir Gilb. Do with him! why, I'll let him have it, and get my Money: I had better do that, than be obliged to fight for't, or give it the Lawyers.

Fran. Nay, that's true too.

Sir Gilb. Here's another now, from one of my Wife's hopeful Relations, an extravagant Puppy, that has rattled a gilt Chariot to pieces before it was paid for—but he'll die in Jail.

Fran. [Reading.] Dear Knight.

I see he's familiar.

Sir Gilb. Nay, it's all of a piece.

Fran. Not to mince the Matter; yesterday, at Marybone, they had me all Bob as a Robin: In short, being out of my Money, I was forced to come the Caster, and tumbled for Five hundred dead: Besides which, I owe Crop the Lender a Brace, and if I have a single Simon to pay him, rot me: But the queer Coll promises to advance me t'other three, and bring me home, provided you will let him sneak into your List for a cool Thousand. You know it's a Debt of Honour in me, and will cost you nothing. Yours in haste,

Robert Rattle.

Fran. The Style is extraordinary.

Gran. And his Motives irresistible.

Sir Gilb. Nay, I have them from all Nations, here's one now from an Irish Relation of my own.

Fran. O! pray let's see.

Sir Gilb. There,

Frankley

[Frankley reads.

Loving Cousin, and my dear Life,

There is only my Brother Patrick, and tat is two of us :
And because we would have a graate Respect for our Re-
lations, we are come posht from Tipperary, with a lov-
ing Design to put both our Families upon one anoder.
And though we have no Acquaintance with your braave
Daughters, we saw them yesterday at the Cathedral-
Church, and find they wil sharave us wel enough. And
to shew our shincere Affections, we wil taake them
widout never a Penny of Money ; only as a smaal Token
of Shiwility upon your Side, we deseer the Faavour of
both of us each Ten Thousand in dis saame new Subscrip-
tion : And because in our haste some of our Cloaths and
Bills of Exchange were forgot, pridee be so graateful
as to send us two Score Pounds, to put us into some Wor-
ship for the mean time. So dis was all from, my dear
Life,

Your humble Sarvant,

And loving Relation,

Owen Mac-Ogle.

Fran. A very modest Epistle, truly !

Sir Gilb. O ! here's my List——now Mr. Granger
we'll see what we can do for you——hold ! here
are some People that have no Buisness here, I am sure—
ay, here ! here's Dr. Bullmbear——One Thou-
sand——why ay——I was forced to put him down
to get rid of him. The Man has no Conscience :
Don't I know he is in every Court-List under a sham
Name——Indeed, Domine Doctor, you can't be
here.

[Scratches him out.

Then here's another Favourite of my Wife's too——
Signior Caponi da Capo——Two Thousand——
What ! because he can get as much for a Song, does
he think to have it for whistling too—Huh ! huh ! huh !
not I troth ! ! am not for sending our Money into
Popish Countries.

[Blots him out.

Fran. Rightly consider'd, Sir.

Sir Gilb. Let's see, who's next——Sir James Ba-
ker Knight, One Thousand.

Gran. Who's he, Sir ?

Sir Gilb. O ! a very ingenious Person, he's well
known at Court, he must stand ; besides, I believe we
shall

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shall employ him in our *Spanish Trade*——O! here we can spare you one, I believe——Sir *Isaac Bickerstaff* Knight, One Thousand.

Fran. What! the fam'd Censor of *Great Britain*?

Sir *Gilb.* No, no; he was a very honest pleasant Fellow, this is only a Relation——a mere Whimsical, that will draw no body's way but his own, and is always wiser than his Betters: I don't understand that sort of Wisdom, that's for doing good to every body but himself; let those list him that like him, he shall ride in no Troop of mine, Odsheartlikins!

[*Blots him.*

Gran. How he damns them with a Dash, like a proscribing Triumvir?

Sir *Gilb.* Let's see, I would feign have another for you——O! here! *William Penkethman* One Thousand. Hah! a very pretty Fellow truly; what! give a Thousand Pounds to a Player——why it's enough to turn his Brain; we shall have him grow proud, and quit the Stage upon it: No, no, keep him poor, and let him mind his Business; if the Puppy leaves off playing the Fool, he's undone. No, no, I won't hurt the Stage, my Wife loves Plays; and whenever she's there, I am sure of three hours Quiet at home——[*Blots, &c.*] Let's see; one, three, four, five, ay, just *Frankley's* Sum——here's Five Thousand for you, Mr. *Granger*, with a wet Finger.

Gran. Sir, I shall ever be in your Debt.

Sir *Gilb.* Pooh! you owe me nothing.

Fran. You have the Happiness of this Life, Sir *Gilbert*, the Power of obliging all about you.

Sir *Gilb.* O! Mr. *Frankley*! Money won't do every thing, I am uneasy at home for all this.

Fran. Is that possible, Sir, while you have so fine a Lady?

Sir *Gilb.* Ay, ay, you are her Favourite, and have Learning enough to understand her; but——she is too wise, and too wilful for me.

Fran. O! Sir, Learning's a fine Accomplishment in a fine Lady.

Sir *Gilb.* Ay, it's no matter for that, she's a great Plague to me: Not but my Lord Bishop her Uncle was

a mighty good Man ; she lived along with him ; I took her upon his word : 'twas he made her a Scholar ; I thought her a Miracle——Before I had her I us'd to go and hear her talk *Latin* with him an Hour together ; and there I—I—I play'd the Fool——I was wrong, I was wrong——I should not have marry'd again——and yet I was so fond of her Parts, I begg'd him to give my eldest Daughter the same fine Education ; and so he did——but to tell you the truth, I believe both their Heads are turn'd.

Gran. A good Husband, Sir, would set your Daughter right, I warrant you.

Sir Gilb. He must come out of the Clouds then ; for she thinks no mortal Man can deserve her : what think you, Mr. *Frankley*, you had soon enough of her ?

Fran. I think still, she may deserve any mortal Man, Sir.

Gran. I can't boast of my Merit, Sir *Gilbert* ; but I wish you would give me leave to take my Chance with her.

Sir Gilb. Will you dine with me ?

Fran. Sir, you shall not ask me twice.

Sir Gilb. And you, Mr. *Frankley* ?

Fran. Thank you, Sir, I have had the Honour of my Lady's Invitation before I came out.

Sir Gilb. O! then pray don't fail ; for when you are there, she's always in Humour.

Gran. I hope, Sir, we shall have the Happiness of the young Lady's Company too.

Sir Gilb. Ay, ay——after Dinner I'll talk with you.

Fran. Not forgetting your fair Favourite, *Charlotte*, Sir!

Sir Gilb. Look you, Mr. *Frankley*, I understand you ; you have a mind to my Daughter *Charlotte* ; and I have often told you, I have no Exceptions to you : and therefore you may well wonder why I yet scruple my Consent.

Fran. You have a Right to refuse it, no doubt, Sir ; but, I hope, you can't blame me for asking it.

Sir Gilb. In troth I don't ; and I wish you had it with all my Heart : But so it is——there's no Comfort
sure

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sure in this Life : For though by this glorious State of our Stocks, I have rais'd my poor single Plumb to a Pomegranate ; yet, if they had not risen quite so high, you and I, Mr. *Frankly*, might possibly have been both happier Men than we are.

Fran. How so, Sir?

Sir Gilb. Why at the Price it now is, I am under Contract to give one of the greatest Coxcombs upon Earth the Refusal of marrying which of my Daughters he pleases.

Gran. Hey day ! What is Marriage a Bubble too ?
[*Aside.*

Sir Gilb. Nay, and am bound in Honour even to speak a good word for him : You know young *Witling*.

Fran. I could have guess'd your Coxcomb, Sir ; but, I hope, he has not yet named the Lady.

Sir Gilb. Not directly : but I guess his Inclinations ; and expect, every hour, to have him make his Call upon my Content, according to Form.

Fran. Is this possible ?

Gran. Sir, if he should happen to name *Sophronia*, will you give me leave to drub him out of the Contract ?

Sir Gilb. By no means : Credit's a nice Point ; and People won't suppose that would be done without my Connivance : beside, I believe *Sophronia*'s in no danger. But because one can be sure of nothing, Gentlemen, I demand both of your Words of Honour, that, for my sake, you will neither of you use any acts of Hostility.

Fran. Sir, In this Case you have a Right to command us.

Sir Gilb. Your Hands upon't.

Both. And our Words of Honour.

Sir Gilb. I am satisfy'd——If we can find a Way to out-wit him——so——if not——Odso ! here he comes : I beg your pardon, Gentlemen ; but I won't be in his way, till I cannot help it. Hum ! hum !

[*Exit Sir Gilb.*

Gran. A very odd Circumstance.

Fran. I am afraid there is something in it ; and begin

gin to think now, my Friend *Witling* (in his Raillery yesterday with *Charlotte*) knew what he said himself, tho' he did not care whether any body else did.

Gran. Sure! it cannot be real; I always took *Witling* for a Beggar.

Fran. So he was, or very near it, some Months ago; but since Fortune has been playing her Tricks here, she has rewarded his Merit, it seems, with about an Hundred Thousand Pounds out of *Change-Alley*.

Gran. Nay, then he may be dangerous indeed.

Fran. I long to know the bottom of it.

Gran. That you can't fail of, for you know he's vain and familiar; and here he comes.

Enter Witling.

Wit. Hah! my little *Granger*! How dost thou do, Child? Where the Devil hast thou been this Age? What's the reason you never come among us? *Frankley*! give me thy little Finger, my Dear.

Gran. Thou art a very impudent Fellow, *Witling*.

Wit. Ay, it's no matter for that; thou art a pleasant one, I am sure; for thou always make'st us laugh?

Fran. Us! who the Devil dost thou mean by Us, now?

Wit. Why, your pretty Fellows, my dear; your *Bons Vivants*, your Men of Wit and Taste, Child.

Gran. I know very few of those; but I come from a Country, Sir, where half the Nation are just such pretty Fellows as thou art.

Wit. Hah! that must be a pleasant Place indeed! What dost thou come from Paradise, Child? Ha! ha! ha!

Fran. Don't you know he's just come from France, Sir!

Wit. You jest!

Gran. Why ay——Now you see, *Witling*, your Vanity has brought you into a Fool's Paradise.

Wit. O! you pleasant Cur! what *Paris quasi par Diis*, or Paradise. Ha! I wish I had been with you; I am sure you would have thought it Paradise then.

Gran. Nay, now he's fairly in.

Wit. 'Tis impossible to be out on't, Sir, in your Company;

Company ; wherever you are, it's always Paradise to me, depend upon't. Ha ! ha !

Fran. Faith, *Granger*, there I think he came up with you.

Gran. Nay, since the Rogue has Money, we must of course allow him Wit : But I think he's one of your good-natur'd ones ; he does not only find the Jest, but the Laugh too.

Wit. Ay ! and to hear thee talk, Child, how is it possible to want either ? Ha ! ha !

Fran. Good again ! Well said, *Witling* ! Why thou art as sharp to-day——

Wit. As a Glover's Needle, my Dear, I always dart it into your Leather-heads with three Edges : Ha ! ha !

Gran. Prithee, *Witling*, does not thy Assurance sometimes meet with a Repartee, that only lights upon the Outside of thy Head.

Wit. O ! your Servant, Sir : What ! now your Fire's gone, you would knock me down with the But-end, would you ? Ha ! it's very well, Sir ; I ha' done : I see it's a Folly to draw Bills upon a Man that has no Affets.

Gran. And to do it upon a Man, that has no Cash of thine in his hands, is the Impudence of a Bankrupt.

Wit. Pshah ! a mere Flash in the Pan——Well ! well ! it's all over——Come, come, a Truce, a Truce ! I ha' done ; I beg pardon.

Gran. Why, thou vain Rogue ! thy Good-nature has more Impudence than thy Wit : Dost thou suppose I can ever take any thing ill of thee ?

Wit. Pshah ! fy ! What dost thou talk, Man ; Why I know thou canst not live without me : Dost think I don't know how to make Allowances ? Tho', if I have too much Wit, and thou hast too little, how the Devil can either of us help it, you know ? Ha ! ha !

Fran. Ha ! ha ! honest *Witling* is not to be put out of humour, I see.

Gran. No, Faith, nor out of countenance——

Wit. Not I, Faith, my Friend ; and a Man of Turn may say any thing to me——Not but I see, by his Humour, something is gone wrong——I hold fix to

four

four now, thou hast been crabb'd at *Paris* in the *Mississippi*.

Gran. Not I, Faith, Sir; I would no more put my Money into the Stocks there, than my Legs into the Stocks here: There's no getting home again, when you have a mind to it.

Wit. Hah! very good! but prithee tell us: What is the *Quinquinois* as pleasant as our *Change-Alley* here?

Gran. Much the same Comedy, Sir: where poor wise Men are only Spectators, and laugh to see Fools make their Fortune.

Wit. Ay, but there we differ, Sir; for there are Men of Wit too, that have made their Fortunes among us, to my Knowledge.

Gran. Very likely, Sir; when Fools are flush of Money, Men of Wit won't be long without it: I hear you have been fortunate, Sir.

Wit. Humh! I-gad, I don't know whether he calls me a Wit or a Fool.

Gran. O fy! every body knows you have a great deal of Money.

Fran. And I don't know any Man pretends to more Wit.

Wit. Nay, that's true too: But——I-gad I believe he has me.

Gran. But, prithee, *Witling*, how came a Man of thy Parts ever to think of raising thy Fortune in *Change-Alley*? How didst thou make all this Money thou art master of?

Wit. Why, as other Men of Wit and Parts often do; by having little or nothing to lose; I rais'd my Fortune, Sir, as *Milo* lifted the Bull, by sticking to it every day, when it was but a Calf. I sous'd them with Premiums, Child, and laid them on thick when the Stock was low; and did it all from a Brass Nail, Boy. In short, by being dirty once a day for a few Months, taking a lodging at my Broker's, and rising at the same Hour I used to go to bed at this end of the Town; I have at last made up my Accounts: and now wake every Morning Master of Five-and-twenty Hundred

dred a Year, *Terra Firma*, and Pelf in my Pocket, Boy: I have Fun in my Fob beside, Child.

Gran. And all this out of *Change-Alley*?

Wit. Every Shilling, Sir; all out of Stocks, Putts, Bulls, Rams, Bears, and Bubbles.

Gran. These Frolicks of Fortune do some Justice at least; they sufficiently mortify the Proud and Envious, that have not been the better for them.

Fran. O! I know some are ready to burst even at the Good Fortune of their own Relations.

Wit. I-gad, and so do I; there's that furly Put, my Uncle the Counsellor, won't pull off his Hat to me now——A poor slaving Cur, that is not worth above a Thousand a Year, and minds nothing but his Business——

Fran. And so is out of humour with you, because you have done that in a Twelvemonth, that he has been drudging for these twenty Years?

Wit. But I intend to send him word, if he does not mend his Manners, now I shall disinherit him.

Gran. What are we to think of this, *Frankley*? Is Fortune really in her Wits, or is the World out of them?

Fran. Much as it used to be; she has only found a new Channel for her Tides of Favour.

Wit. Prithce why dost not come into the Alley, and see us scramble for them? If you have a mind to philosophize, there——there's Work for your Speculations! I-gad! I never go there, but it puts me in mind of the Poetical Regions of Death, where all Mankind are upon a level: There you'll see a Duke dangling after a Director; here a Peer and a Prentice haggling for an Eighth; there a Jew and a Parson making up Differences; here! a young Woman of Quality buying Bears of a Quaker; and there an old one selling Refusals to a Lieutenant of Grenadiers.

Fran. What a Medley of Mortals has he jumbled together?

Wit. O! there's no such Fun in the Universe! I-gad! there's no getting away: Perish me! if I have had time to see my Mistress, but of a Sunday, these three Months.

Gran.

Gran. Thy Mistress! What dost thou mean? Thou speak'st as if thou hadst but one.

Wit. Why no more I have not, that I care a Farthing for: I may, perhaps, have a Stable of Scrubs, to mount my Footmen when I rattle into Town, or so; but this is a choice Pad, Child, that I design for my own Riding.

Fran. Prithee, who is she?

Wit. I'll shew you, my Dear——I think I have her here in my Pocket.

Gran. What dost thou mean?

Wit. Look you, I know you are my Friends; and therefore, since I am sure it's in nobody's power to hurt me, I'll venture to trust you——There! that's Whoo, Child.

[*Shows a Paper.*]

[*Reads.*]

To Sir Gilbert Wrangle:

Sir, according to your Contract of the 11th of February last, I now make my Election of your younger Daughter, Mrs. Charlotte Wrangle; and do hereby demand your Consent, to be forthwith join'd to the said Charlotte in the sober State of Matrimony. Witness my Hand, &c.

William Witling.

Fran. What a merry World do we live in?

Gran. This indeed is extraordinary.

Wit. I think so: I'll assure you, Gentlemen, I take this to be the *Coup de Maître* of the whole Alley: This is a Call now, that none of your thick-skull'd Calculators could ever have thought on.

Gran. Well, Sir, and does this Contract secure the Lady's Fortune to you too?

Wit. O! Pox! I knew that was all Rug before: He had settled Three Thousand a-piece upon them in the *South-Sea*, when it was only about *Par*, provided they married with his Consent, which by this Contract you know I have a right to——So there's another Thirty Thousand dead, my Dear.

Fran. But pray, Sir, has not the Lady herself a Right of Refusal, as well as you, all this while?

Wit. A Right! ay, who doubts it? Every Woman has a Right to be a Fool, if she has a mind to it, that's certain: But *Charlotte* happens to be a Girl of Taste,
my

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my Dear; she is none of those Fools, that will stand in her own light, I can tell you.

Fran. Well, but do you expect she should blindly Consent to your Bargain?

Wit. Blindly! No, Child: But dost thou imagine any Citizen's Daughter can refuse a Man of my Figure and Fortune, with her Eyes open?

Gran. Impudent Rogue! [*Afide.*

Fran. Nay, I grant your Security's good, Sir: But, I mean, you have still left her Consent at large in the Writing?

Wit. Her Consent! didst thou think I minded that, Man? I knew, if the Stock did but whip up, I should make no more of her, than a poach'd Egg——But to let you into the Secret, my Dear, I am secure of that already; for the Slut's in love with me, and does not know it: Ha! ha! ha!

Fran. How came you to know it then?

Wit. By her ridiculous pretending to hate me, Child: for we never meet, but 'tis a mortal War; and never part, till one of us is rallied to death: Ha! ha!

Fran. Nay, then it must be a Match; for I see you are resolved to take no Answer.

Wit. Not I, Faith! I know her Play too well for that! In short, I am this very Evening to attack her in form; and to shew you I am a Man of Skill, I intend to make my first Breach from a Battery of *Italian Musick*, in which I design to sing my own *Io-Pa-an*, and enter the Town in Triumph.

Fran. You are not going to her now?

Wit. No, no, I must first go and give the Governor my Summons here: I must find out Sir *Gilbert*; he's hereabouts: I long to make him growl a little; for I know he'll fire, when he reads it, as if it were a *Scire Facias* against the Company's Charter. Ha! ha!

[*Exit Wit.*

Fran. When all's said, this Fellow seems to feel his Fortune more than most of the Fools that have been lately taken into her Favour.

Gran. Pox on him! I had rather have his Constitution, than his Money: Prithee let's follow, and see how the old Gentleman receives him.

Fran.

Fran. No——excuse me; I can't rest till I see *Charlotte*——You know my Affairs now require Attendance.

Gran. That's true; I beg you take no notice to *Sophronia* of my being in Town: I have my Reasons for it.

Fran. Very well; we shall meet at Dinner——
Adieu. [Exeunt severally.]

ACT II.

The SCENE, Sir Gilbert's House.

Sophronia and Charlotte.

Char. HA! ha! ha!

Soph. Dear Sister! don't be so boisterous in your Mirth: You really overpower me! So much vociferation is insupportable.

Char. Well! well! I beg your Pardon——But you know Laughing is the wholesomest thing in the World; and when one has a hearty Occasion——

Soph. To be vulgar—you are resolv'd to appear so.

Char. O! I cannot help it, I love it dearly; and pray where's the harm of it?

Soph. Look you, Sister, I grant you, that Risibility is only given to the *Animal Rational*; but you really indulge it, as if you could give no other Proof of your Species.

Char. And if I were to come into your Sentiments, dear Sister, I am afraid the World would think I were of no Species at all.

Soph. The World, Sister, is a Generation of Ignorants: And for my part, I am resolv'd to do what in me lies to put an end to Posterity.

Char. Why you don't despair of a Man, I hope.

Soph. No; but I will have all Mankind despair of me.

Char. You'll positively die a Maid?

Soph. You, perhaps, may think that dying a Martyr; but I shall not die a Brute, depend upon't.

Char. Nay I don't think you'll die either, if you can help it.

Soph. What do you mean, Madam?

Char.

Char. Only, Madam, that you are a Woman, and may happen to change your Mind: that's all.

Soph. A Woman! that's so like your ordinary way of thinking; as if Souls had any Sexes—No—when I die, Madam, I shall endeavour to leave such Sentiments behind me, that—(*non omnis moriar*) the World will be convinc'd my purer Part had no Sex at all.

Char. Why, truly, it will be hard to imagine, that any one of our Sex could make such a Resolution: tho' I hope we are not bound to keep all we make neither.

Soph. You'll find, Madam, that an elevated Soul may be always master of it's perishable Part.

Char. But, dear Madam, do you suppose our Souls are cramm'd into our Bodies merely to spoil sport, that a virtuous Woman is only sent hither of a Fool's Errand? What's the use of our coming into the World, if we are to go out of it, and leave no-body behind us.

Soph. If our Species can be only supported by those gross Mixtures, of which Cookmaids and Footmen are capable, People of Rank and Erudition ought certainly to detest them. O! what pity 'tis the Divine Secret should be lost! I have somewhere read of an ancient Naturalist, whose laborious Studies had discover'd a more innocent way of Propagation; but, it seems, his Tablets unfortunately falling into his Wife's Hands, the gross Creature threw them into the Fire.

Char. Indeed, my dear Sister, if you talk thus in Company, People will take you for a Mad-woman.

Soph. I shall be even with them, and think those mad, that differ from my Opinion.

Char. But I rather hope the World will be so charitable, as to think this is not your real Opinion.

Soph. I shall wonder at nothing that's said or thought by People of your sullied Imagination.

Char. Sullied! I would have you to know, Madam, I think of nothing but what's decent and natural.

Soph. Don't be too positive, Nature has its Indecencies.

Char. That may be; but I don't think of them.

Soph. No! Did not you own to me just now, you were determin'd to marry?

Char. Well! and where's the Crime, pray?

Soph.

Soph. What ! You want me to explain ? But I shall not defile my Imagination with such gross Ideas.

Char. But, dear Madam, if Marriage were such an abominable Business, how comes it that the World allows it to be honourable ? And I hope you won't expect me to be wiser than any of my Ancestors, by thinking the contrary ;

Soph. No ; but if you will read History, Sister, you will find, that the Subjects of the greatest Empire upon Earth were only propagated from violated Chastity : The *Sabine* Ladies were Wives, 'tis true, but glorious, ravish'd, Wives. Vanquish'd they were indeed, but they surrender'd not : They scream'd, and cry'd, and tore, and as far as their weak Limbs would give them leave, resisted, and abhorr'd the odious Joy——

Char. And yet, for all that Niceness, they brought a chopping Race of Rakes, that bully'd the whole World about them.

Soph. The greater still their Glory, that though they were naturally profligate, their Resistance proved they were not Slaves to Appetite.

Char. Ah ! Sister ! if the *Romans* had not been so sharp set, the glorious Resistance of those fine Ladies might have been all turn'd into Coquetry.

Soph. There's the Secret, Sister ; had our modern Dames but the true *Sabine* Spirit of Disdain, Mankind might be again reduced to those old *Roman* Extremities ; and our shameless Brides would not then be led, but dragg'd to the Altar ; their *Sponsalia* not call'd a Marriage, but a Sacrifice : And the conquer'd Beauty, not the bridal Virgin, but the Victim.

Char. O ridiculous ! And so you would have no Woman married that were not first ravish'd, according to Law ?

Soph. I would have Mankind owe their Conquest of us rather to the Weakness of our Limbs than of our Souls. And if defenceless Women must be Mothers, the Brutality at least should lie all at their door.

Char. Have a care of this Over-Niceness, dear Sister, lest some agreeable young Fellow should seduce you to the Confusion of parting with it. You'd make a most rueful Figure in Love !

Soph.

Soph. Sister, you make me shudder at your Freedom ! I in love ! I admit a Man ! What ! become the voluntary, the lawful Object of a corporeal Sensuality ! Like you ! to chuse myself a Tyrant ! a Despoiler ! a Husband ! Ugh !

Char. I am afraid, by this Disorder of your Thoughts, dear Sister, you have got one in your Head, that you don't know how to get rid of.

Soph. I have, indeed ; but it's only the Male-Creature that you have a mind to.

Char. Why, that's possible too ; for I have often observ'd you uneasy at Mr. *Frankley's* being particular to me.

Soph. If I am, 'tis upon your account, because I know he imposes upon you.

Char. You know it ?

Soph. I know his Heart, and that another is Mistress of it.

Char. Another ?

Soph. Another, but one that to my knowledge will never hear of him ; so don't be uneasy, dear Sister, all in my power you may be assur'd of.

Char. Surprizingly kind indeed !

Soph. And you know too I have a great deal in my Inclination——

Char. For me ? or him, dear Sister ?

Soph. Nay, now you won't suffer me to oblige you. I tell you, I hate the Animal, and, for half a good word, would give him away.

Char. What ! before you have him ?

Soph. This affected Ignorance is so vain, dear Sister, that I now think it high time to explain to you.

Char. Then we shall understand one another.

Soph. You don't know, perhaps, that Mr. *Frankley* is passionately in love with me ?

Char. I know, upon his treating with my Father, his Lawyer once made you some Offers.

Soph. Why then you may know too, that upon my slighting those Offers, he fell immediately into a violent Despair.

Char. I did not hear of its Violence.

Soph. So violent, that he has never since dar'd to open

pen his Lips to me about it ; but to revenge the secret Pains I gave him, has made his publick Addresses to you.

Char. Indeed, Sister, you surprize me ; and 'tis hard to say, that Men impose more upon us, than we upon ourselves.

Soph. Therefore, by what I have told you, you may now be convinc'd he is false to you.

Char. But is there a Necessity, my dear *Sophronia*, that I must rather believe you than him ? Hah ! hah ! hah !

Soph. How, Madam ? Have you the Confidence to question my Veracity, by supposing me capable of an Endeavour to deceive you ?

Char. No hard Words, dear Sister ; I only suppose you as capable of deceiving yourself, as I am.

Soph. Oh ! mighty probable indeed ! You are a Person of infinite Penetration ! Your Studies have open'd to you the utmost Recesses of Human Nature : But let me tell you, Sister, that Vanity is the only Fruit of Toilet-Lucubrations. I deceive myself : Hah ! hah ! hah !

Char. One of us certainly does ! Hah ! hah !

Soph. There I agree with you. Hah ! hah !

Char. Till I am better convinc'd then on which side the Vanity lies, give me leave to laugh in my turn, dear Sister.

Soph. O ! by all means, sweet Madam ! hah ! hah !

Both. Hah ! hah ! hah !

Char. O ! here's Mamma, she perhaps may decide the Question. Hah ! hah !

Enter Lady Wrangle.

L. Wr. So, Mrs. *Charlotte* ! what wonderful Nothing, pray, may be the Subject of this mighty Merriment ?

Soph. Nothing indeed, Madam, or what's next to nothing ; a Man, it seems. Hah ! hah !

L. Wr. *Charlotte*, wilt thou never have any thing else in thy Head ?

Char. I was in hopes nothing, that was in my Sister's Head, would be a Crime in mine, Madam.

B

L. Wr.

L. *Wr.* Your Sister's! What? How? Who is it you are laughing at?

Char. Only one another, Madam; but perhaps your Ladyship may laugh at us both; for, it seems, my Sister and I both insist, that Mr. *Frankley* is positively in love but with one of us.

L. *Wr.* Who, Child?

Soph. Mr. *Frankley*, Madam.

L. *Wr.* Mr. *Frankley* in love with one of you!

Soph. Ay, Madam; but it seems we both take him to ourselves.

L. *Wr.* Then *Charlotte* was in the right in one Point.

Soph. In what, dear Madam?

L. *Wr.* Why, that for the same reason you have been laughing at one another, I must humbly beg leave to laugh at you both—Hah! hah!

Char. So! this is rare Sport. (*Aside.*)

L. *Wr.* But pray, Ladies, how long has the Chimæra of this Gentleman's Passion for you been in either of your Heads?

Soph. Nay, Madam, not that I value the Conquest, but your Ladyship knows he once treated with my Father upon my Account.

L. *Wr.* I know he made that his Pretence to get acquainted in the Family.

Soph. Perhaps, Madam, I have more coercive Reasons, but am not concern'd enough at present to insist upon their Validity.

L. *Wr.* *Sophronia*, you have Prudence. [*Soph. walks by, and reads.*] But what have you to urge, sweet Lady? How came this Gentleman into your Head, pray?

Char. Really, Madam, I can't well say how he got in, but there he is, that's certain: What will be able to get him out again, Heaven knows.

L. *Wr.* Oh! I'll inform you then; think no more of him than he thinks of you, and I'll answer for your Cure. Hah! hah! hah!

Char. I shall follow your Prescription, Madam, when I am once sure how little he thinks of me.

L. *Wr.* Then judge of that, when I assure you, that his Heart is utterly and solely given up to me.

Soph.

The Ladies Philosophy.

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Soph. Well! I did not think my Lady had been capable of so much Weakness.

(Aside.)

Char. How! to you, Madam? How is that possible, unless he makes you dishonourable Offers?

L. Wr. There's no occasion to suppose that neither; there are Passions you have no Notion of: He knows my Virtue is impregnable; but that——preserves him mine.

Char. Nay, this does puzzle me indeed, Madam.

Soph. If you had ever read *Plato*, Sister, you might have known, that Passions of the greatest Dignity have not their Source from Veins and Arteries.

L. Wr. *Sophronia*, give me leave to judge of that; perhaps I don't insist that he is utterly *Platonick* neither: The Mansion of the Soul may have its Attractions too; he is as yet but *Udum & Molle Lutum*——and may take what Form I please to give him.

Char. Well, Madam, since I see he is so utterly at your Ladyship's Disposal, and that 'tis impossible your Virtue can make any use of him in my vulgar way; shall I beg your good Word to my Father, only to make me Mistress of his mortal Part?

L. Wr. Heavens! what will this World come to? This Creature has scarce been two Years from School, and yet is impatient for a Husband? No, Madam, you are too young as yet; but—*Cruda Marito*. Your Education is not yet finish'd; first cultivate your Mind, correct and mortify these Sallies of your Blood; learn of your Sister here, to live a bright Example of your Sex; refine your Soul, give your happier Hours up to Science, Arts, and Letters; enjoy the Raptures of Philosophy, subdue your Passions, and renounce the sensual Commerce of Mankind.

Char. O! dear Madam, I should make a piteous Philosopher; indeed your Ladyship had much better put me out to the Business I am fit for: Here's my Sister has Learning enough o' Conscience for any one Family; and, of the two, I had much rather follow your Ladyship's Example, and use my humble endeavours to increase it.

L. Wr. My Example! Do you suppose then, if I

had been capable of gross Desires, I would have chosen your Father for the Gratificator of them?

Char. Why not, Madam? my Papa's a hale Man, and though he has twice your Ladyship's Age, he walks as strait, and leads up a Country-Dance as brisk, as a Beau at a Ball.

L. Wr. Come, none of your sensual Inferences from thence; I was govern'd by my Parents: I had other Views in marrying Mr. *Wrangle*.

Char. Yes, a swinging Jointure. (*Aside.*

L. Wr. When you have gone through my Studies, Madam, Philosophy will tell you, 'tis possible a well-natur'd Mind, tho' fated to a Husband, may be at once a Wife and Virgin.

Char. Prodigious! (*Aside.*

L. Wr. What is't you smile at, Madam?

Char. Nothing, Madam, only I don't understand these Philosophical Mysteries; but if your Ladyship will indulge me, in marrying Mr. *Frankley*, as for dying a Maid afterwards, I'll take my Chance for it.

L. Wr. What a giddy Confidence! But thou art strangely vain, *Charlotte*, to be so importunate for a Man, that, as I have told thee, has the Misfortune to be passionately in love with me.

Char. Indeed, indeed, Madam, if your Ladyship would but give him leave to open his Mind freely, he would certainly tell you another Story.

L. Wr. I will send for him this minute, and convince you of your Error.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Madam, Mr. *Frankley*.

L. Wr. He never came more opportunely: Desire him to walk in.

Enter Mr. Frankley.

L. Wr. O! Mr. *Frankley*, the welcomest Man alive.

Fran. Then I am the happiest, I am sure, Madam.

L. Wr. O fy! is there any one of this Company could make you so?

Fran. There's one in the Company, Madam, has a great deal more in her Power, than I'm afraid she'll part with to me.

Soph.

The Ladies Philosophy.

31

Soph. Are you this hard-hearted Lady, Sister? Does this Description reach you, pray? (*Aside.*)

Char. The Power does not describe you, I'll answer for it. (*Aside.*)

L. Wr. Nay, now you grow particular—You have something to say to one of these Ladies, I am sure.

[*To Frankley.*]

Fran. I have something, Madam, to say to both of them.

Soph. Shall we let him speak, Sister?

Char. Freely.

L. Wr. Which of these two now, if you were free to chuse, could you really give up your Heart to?

Fran. O! Madam, as to that I dare only say, as Sir *John Suckling* did upon the same Occasion.

Soph. Pray, what was that?

Fran. *He sure is happiest that has Hopes of either:*

Next him, is He, that sees you both together.

L. Wr. Perfectly fine: Nor is there more Wit in the Verses themselves, than in your polite Application of them—Mr. *Frankley*, I must beg your pardon——I know it's rude to whisper, but you have Good-nature; and to oblige a Woman——

Fran. Is the Business of my Life, Madam——What the Devil can all this mean? I have been odly catechiz'd here——Sure they have not all agreed to bring me to a Declaration for one of them——it looks a little like it——But then, how comes *Charlotte* into so vain a Project? nay, so hazardous? She can't but know, my holding the other two in play has been the only means of my getting Admittance to her——perhaps they may have piqued her into this Experiment——not unlikely——but I must be cautious. (*Aside.*)

L. Wr. Nay, Ladies, you can't but say I laid you fairly in his way: (*Apart to Soph. and Char.*) And yet you see from how palpable a Regard to me, he has ingeniously avoided a Declaration for either of you, at least.

Soph. Your Ladyship won't be offended, if, for a moment, we should suspend your Conclusion.

L. Wr. Not in the least; if Suspence can make you happy, live always in it.

Char. But pray, Madam, let him go on a little.

B 3

L. Wr.

32 *The REFUSAL; or,*

L. Wr. Oh! you shall have enough of him. Well, you are a horrid Tyrant, Mr. *Frankley*: Don't you plainly see, here are two Ladies in this Company, that have a mind you should declare in favour of one of them?

Fran. Yes, Madam, but I plainly see, there are three Ladies in the Company.

L. W. What then?

Fran. Why then, Madam, I am more afraid of offending that third Person, than either of the other two.

L. Wr. (to *Soph.* and *Char.*) Observe his Diffidence, his Awe, he knows I love Respect.

Soph. With Submission, Madam, I never was familiar with him.

L. Wr. Come, now do you both ask the Question, as I have done, each exclusive of herself.

Char. Your Ladyship's in the right—— (Aside. Sir, without any Apology then, I am oblig'd to ask you, whether it be my Lady or my Sister, you really are in love with?)

Fran. So now it's plain. (Aside) When either of them ask me, you'll be out of the Question, I can assure you, Madam,

L. Wr. Ha! ha!

Soph. Who's in the Question now, Sister?

Char. If I had put myself in, you would not have been there, I'll answer for him. (Aside)

Soph. Then I'll do you that Favour, Madam.

Fran. So, now the t'other——but I am ready for her too.

Soph. You see, Sir, the Humour we are in: Tho' don't suppose, if I ask you the same Question, 'tis from the same Motive; but since these Ladies have oblig'd me to it—Which of them is it you sincerely are a Slave to?

Fran. Since I find your Motive is only Complaisance to them, Madam, I hope you will not think it needs an Answer.

Soph. I am satisfy'd——

Your Ladyship was pleas'd to mention Respect——I think there's Respect and Demonstration too, Madam.

(Aside to *L. Wr.*
L. Wr.

L. Wr. I grant it—but both to me, Child—
But I will speak once more for all of us—Sir, that
you may not be reduc'd to farther Ambiguities—
suppose we are all agreed, you should have leave to de-
clare which of us then your Heart is utterly in the Dis-
posal of?

Fran. Then I must suppose, Madam, that one of
you has a mind I should make the other two my E-
nemies.

L. Wr. All your Friends, depend upon us.

Fran. So were all the three Goddesses to *Paris*, Ma-
dam, 'till he presum'd to be particular, and rashly
gave the Apple to *Venus*: You know, Madam, *Juno*
was his immortal Enemy ever after.

—*Manet alta mente repōsum*

Judicium Paridis, spretæque Injuria Formæ.

L. Wr. Sir, you are excus'd; the Modesty and Ele-
gance of your Reply has charm'd me.

Soph. Now, Sister, was this Delicacy of his 'Taste
and Learning shewn to recommend himself to me, or
you, think you?

Char. O! I don't dispute its recommending him to
you.

Soph. He thinks it does, depend upon't.

Char. Though I can hardly think that of him, yet
I can't say indeed he has taken much Pains to recom-
mend himself to me all this while: I see no reason, be-
cause they are to be respected forsooth, that I may not
be pleas'd in my turn too. *(To herself.)*

Fran. And now, Ladies, give me leave to ask you a
Question.

L. Wr. You may command us, Sir.

Fran. Then whose cruel Proposal was it to urge me
to a Declaration of my Heart, when you all knew
there was not one of you, from the Disposition of whose
Mind or Circumstances, I could hope the least Favour
or Mercy.

L. Wr. Explain yourself.

Fran. Why first, Madam, as to your Ladyship, you
are honourably dispos'd of—from you my utmost
Vanity could no more form a Hope, than could your
Virtue give it—And here *(To Soph.)* if possible, my

34 *The REFUSAL; or,*

Fate were harder still——here I must have to encounter Rivals numberless and invincible.

Soph. Rivals!

Fran. Ay, Madam, is not every Volume in your Library a Rival? Do you not pass whole Days, nay sometimes happier Nights, with them alone? The Living and the Dead promiscuous in your Favour? Old venerable Sages, even in their Graves, can give you Raptures, from whose Divine Enjoyment no mortal Lover can persuade you.

Soph. (to Char.) Is this to please you, Sister?

Char. Truly I think not——he has mistaken the way at least.

Fran. (Turning to Char.) And here, Madam——

L. W. Hold, Sir,——a Truce with your Negatives, lest they grow too vehement in their Affirmation.——you have hitherto my Esteem——preserve it by your Discretion, and force me not to revoke the Freedom I have this Day given you——*Sophronia*, I have carried this Matter to the very utmost Limits of Discretion——I hope you, and your Sister, are now deliver'd from your Error; if not, I'll instantly withdraw, and leave you to a full Conviction.

(Exit Lady Wrangle.

Fran. I am afraid my Lady takes something ill of me.

Soph. Sir, what you have done was from her own Desire; and since I partly am the Occasion, it is but just I stand engag'd for your Reconciliation.

Fran. Then give me leave to hope, Madam——

Soph. From what Pretension, Sir? From any Weakness of my Behaviour? Hope! do you consider the licentious and extensive Consequences of that odious Word? Hope! you make me tremble at the Thought.

Fran. Madam, I only mean——

Soph. I know your Meaning, Sir; and therefore must not hear it.

Fran. This is new with a vengeance.

(Aside.

Soph. Sister, I am sorry our Argument has reduced me to stand so outrageous an Instance of your Conviction; but you may profit from the Insult: You now may learn to moderate your Vanity, and to know yourself.

O! 'tis

O! 'tis a Heavenly Lesson—*E Cælo descendit, Gnotbi*
Jeauton. *Exit.*

Fran. What a solid happiness is now crept into her Mind thro' the Crack of her Brain?—I hope you are not going too, Madam?

Char. I don't know any Business I have here.

Fran. So—I-gad! I have disoblig'd them all, I believe: [*Afide*] You are not out of Humour?

Char. I do not know whether I am or no.

Fran. So cold, *Charlotte*, after I have had my Wit's upon the stretch this half hour, to oblige you?

Char. What, in blowing up other People's Vanity at my Expence?

Fran. Would you have had me blown up their Jealousy, at the Expence of my well-being with you?

Char. You that are so dextrous in imposing upon others, may impose upon me too, for ought I know.

Fran. Come, come, don't impose upon yourself, *Charlotte*, by this groundless, this childish Resentment.

Char. She that has no Resentment at all, may be under-treated as long as she lives, I find.

Fran. Pray think a little; is my having made them ridiculous by your own Consent, exposing you to them, or them to you?

Char. I do not know how the matter's contriv'd; but I certainly find myself uneasy, and you can't persuade me I am not so.

Fran. Well, well; since you can't justify your being in an ill-humour, it's a fair step at least to your coming into a good one.

Char. Come, I will not be wheedled now.

Fran. Nay, but hear me.

Sophronia enters unseen, while Frankley seems to entertain Charlotte apart.

Soph. What can these Creatures be doing alone together? I thought I left my Sister in too ill a Humour to retire with him; but I see these Carnage Lovers have such a Meanness in their Souls, they'll overlook the grossest Usage to accommodate their sensual Concorperation—'Tis so—her Eyes have lost all Resentment

36 *The REFUSAL; or,*

already : But I must not be seen, lest they mistake my innocent Curiosity for Jealousy.

Char. Well, but you might have thrown in a civil thing to me in my turn too.

Fran. Alas! poor Lady! Pray what one civil thing did I mean to any Body but yourself? Besides, was not you one of the three Goddeffes, Miss *Charlotte*? Which of the Company do you suppose I meant by *Venus* pray?

Char. How silly you make me?

Fran. Nay, I was going to say a great deal more to you, if my Lady had not stop't my Mouth.

Soph. Is it possible?

(*Aside.*

Char. Why then I beg your pardon; for in short, I find I have only been Fool enough to be uneasy, because they had not Sense enough to be mortified.

Fran. A pretty innocent Confession truly.

Soph. Have I my Senses?

Char. Well! but tell me what was it you had a mind to say to me?

Fran. Nothing to what I now could say--O! *Charlotte*, my Heart grows full of you; the least look of kindness softens me to folly! Indeed I love you.

Soph. Soh?

Char. And for what, after all?

(*Smiling.*

Fran. For that, and for a thousand Charms beside: (*Pressing her Hand*) There's something in your Looks so soft, so gentle, so resign'd, and plaintive; I loved before I knew it, and only thought I gave the Pity that I wanted.

Char. What Transport's in the Passion, when the Tendernefs is mutual?

Soph. O! the enormous Creature! But I'll be gone, lest her Intoxication should know no Bounds!--No,--on second Thoughts I'll stay-----this odious Object may be useful; Vipers, if rightly taken, are Preservatives; And as the *Spartans* taught their Children to abhor Intemperance, by shewing them their Slaves expos'd, and senseless in their Wine; so I, in Contemplation of this Folly, may be fortified against it--

(*During this, Fr. and Char. seem in an amorous Dispute till he kisses her.*)

The Ladies Philosophy.

37

O! the abandon'd Wantons!—What a riotous Disorder now must run thro' every Vein of her whole System? How can they thus deface the Dignity of human Being? A Kiss, nay then 'tis insupportable. (*She goes to them.*) Sister, I am amaz'd you can stand trifling here, when my Father's come home, and you know he wants you.

Char. She has certainly seen us. (*Aside to Fran.*

Fran. No matter, seem easy, and take no notice.

Apart to Char.

Soph. Shall I tell him you will not come, Madam?

Char. Well, do not be in a Passion, dear Sister.

Fran. O fy! why should you think so? But is Sir Gilbert come in, Madam? I have a little Business with him: If you please, Madam, I'll wait upon you to him.

Char. With all my Heart.

Fran. *Amante Speso, &c.* (*Exit singing with Char.*

Soph. What means this Turbulence of Thought? Why am I thus disorder'd? It cannot,——nay, I will not have it Jealousy——No! if I were capable of Folly, Granger might mislead me; yet still I am disturb'd——Yes, 'tis plain, I am incens'd, provok'd at him; but can I not assign the Cause? O! I have found it——having first offer'd up his Heart to me, his giving it to another, without my Leave, is an Insult on my Merit, and worthy my Resentment——that's all——How then shall I punish him? By securing her to his Rival——*Witling* shall have her; I'll work it by my Lady, she seems his Friend——Yes, yes, that will intirely ease my Heart: How I rejoice to find 'tis only decent Pride that has disturb'd me——Yes, I'll certainly resent it——to their mutual Disappointment.

Thus both shall suffer, doom'd to different Fates:

His be Despair; be her's, the Man she bates. (*Exit.*

A C T

ACT III.

*Lady Wrangle and Sophronia.**Lady Wrangle.*

IMpossible ! You amaze me ! Kifs her, say you ?
What ! as a Lover, amorously ? voluptuously ?

Soph. Infamously ! with all the glowing Fervour of a Libertine.

L. W. Then I'm deceiv'd indeed ! I thought that Virtue, Letters, and Philosophy, had only Charms for him : I have known his Soul all Rapture in their Praises ; nay, and believ'd myself the secret Object of them all. But is he vulgar, brutal then at last ?——No *Punic* Faith so false——'Tis well ! he has deceiv'd me, and I hate him. O that forward Creature !

Soph. She warms as I could wish.

(*Aside.*

L. W. But tell me, dear *Sophronia*, how did that nauseous Girl behave to him ? Was the Shame chiefly his ? Did she resist, or——how was this odious Kifs obtain'd ? Were his Persuasions melting, or her Allurements artful ? Was he ensnared, or did his Wiles seduce her ? O ! tell me all his Baseness ! I burn to know, yet wish to be deceiv'd.

Soph. —— *Speratque Miserrima falli*——Directly jealous of him ; but I'll make my Uses of it. (*Aside*) Nay, Madam, I must own the guilty Part was chiefly her's : Had you but seen the warm Advances that she made him, the Looks, the Smiles, the toying Glances, O ! such wanton Blandishments to allure him ; you would think his Crime, compar'd to her's, but Frailty.

L. W. O ! the little Sorcerers ! but I shall stop her in her loose Career : I'll have her know, forward as she is, her Inclinations shall wait upon my Choice ; and since she will run riot, I'll have her clogg'd immediately ; I'll marry her, *Sophronia* ; but——where I think fit : No ! Mr. *Witling* is her Man, or she's a Maid for ever.

Soph.

Soph. That, Madam, I doubt, she will never be brought to; she mortally hates him,

L. Wr. So much the better; I do not design him therefore as her Happiness, but her Punishment.

Soph. This is fortunate; she even prevents my Purpose. (*Aside.*)

L. Wr. O! that a Man of his sublime Faculties could fall from such a Height——Was ever any thing so mean, *Sophronia*?

Soph. I am surpriz'd indeed; my Sister too is so illiterate, Madam.

L. W. To contaminate his Intellects with such a Chit of an Animal! O *Tempora*!

Soph. O *Mores*! 'Tis a degenerate Age indeed, Madam.

L. Wr. Nothing but Noise and Ignorance; Girls and Vanity have their Attractions now.

Soph. O! there's no living, Madam, while *Coquettes* are so openly tolerat'd among a civiliz'd People!

L. Wr. I protest they are so insolently insidious, they are become mere Nuisances to all innocent Society.

Soph. I am amaz'd the Government should not set the idle Creatures to work.

L. W. The Wisdom of our Ancestors restrain'd such horrid Licences; and, you see the Laws they made, describ'd them all by the modest Term of Spinsters only. But! I'll take care of her, at least; and since she is become a publick Mischief, to humble her will be a public Good: I'll send to Mr. *Witling* this moment, and invite him to dine here. I desire you will be in the way, Child, and assist me in bringing this Matter to a speedy Conclusion. (*Exit.*)

Soph. Yes, I shall assist you, Madam; tho' not to gratify your Resentments, but my own: Poor Lady! is this then all the Fruit of your Philosophy? Is this her Conduct of the Passions, not to endure another should possess what she pretends to scorn? Are these her Self-denials? Where, where was her Self-examination all this while? The least Inquiry there had shewn these Passions as they are: Then had she seen, that all this Anger at my Sister was but Envy; those Reproaches on her Lover, Jealousy; even that Jealousy, the Child of Vanity, and her avow'd Resentment, Malice! Good Heaven! Can she be
this

this Creature, and know it not?—And yet 'tis so—
so partial's Nature to herself:

*That Charity begins, where Knowledge shou'd,
And all our Wisdom's counsel'd by the Blood:
The Faults of others we with Ease discern,
But our own Frailties are the last we learn.*

(*Going off she meets Frankley and Charlotte.*)

Ha! perpetually together?

Char. In Contemplation, Sister? I am afraid we disturb you: Come Mr. Frankley, we'll go into the next Room.

Soph. No, Madam, if you have any Secrets, I'll retire.

Char. Nay, we have none now, Sister, but what I dare swear you are entirely let into: Ha! ha! ha!

Fran. So! She must have a gentle Insult, I find; but it will be prudent in me to keep the Peace. [*Aside.*]

Soph. These Taunts are insupportable! but to confess the Smart, were adding to her Triumph. [*Aside.*]

Char. Why so grave, *Sophronia*?

Soph. Why that Question, Madam? Do you often see me otherwise?

Char. No; but I thought, upon your supposing we had Secrets, you drew up a little.

Soph. 'Tis possible, I might not be in a laughing Humour, without thinking any of your secrets important.

Fran. People, Madam, that think much, always wear a serious Aspect. [*To Char.*]

Soph. As the contrary, Sister, may be a Reason for your continual Mirth.

Char. Well! well! so I am but happy, Sister, I am content you should be wise as long as you live.

Soph. You have one Sign of Wisdom, I see; a little thing contents you—There's no bearing her. [*Ex. Soph.*]

Char. She's in a high Miff.

Fran. I am afraid there is no Good towards us: I observ'd my Lady, as she pass'd too, had much the same Cloud upon her Brow.

Char. Then she has certainly told her how she caught us fooling together.

Fran. No doubt on't; therefore we must expect all the Mischief that either of them can do us.

Char.

Char. My Sister can't do us much, at least.

Fran. She can blow up my Lady; and, you know, my Lady governs your Father.

Char. She does a little overbear him indeed; not but he will make his Party good with her upon Occasion: I have known it come to a drawn Battle between them, especially when he has any Body to stand by him. A sad Life tho', Mr. *Frankley*, when conjugal Engagements are only Battles; does not their Example frighten you?

Fran. I can see no Hazard, in taking my Chance with you, Madam.

Sophronia returns, and stops short, seeing Frankley taking Charlotte's Hand.

Soph. So! closing again the minute they are alone! but I shall make bold with them. (*goes forward*) Pray, Sister, what did you do with that Book of mine you took up this morning.

Char. What Book?

Soph. The *Confutius*, you know, in my Chamber.

Char. O! I did not mind it, I left it upon the green Table.

Soph. Very well—that's all—I beg your pardon: What a melancholy Sight she is?

(*Exit, and drops her Handkerchief.*)

Fran. This Book was only a Pretence to break in upon us.

Char. Plainly—she haunts us like the Ghost in *Hamlet*. But pray, what Talk had you with my Father just now?

Fran. A great deal; we are upon very good Terms there, I can tell you: But his Conscience, it seems, is under the most ridiculous Dilemma, sure, that ever was.

Char. What do you mean?

Fran. If you will have Patience to hear it, I'll tell you.

Char. I shall have no Patience 'till I do hear it.

Fran. You must know then, some time ago, Sir *Gilbert* happen'd in a mix'd Company in *Change-Alley*, to join in a Laugh at Mr. *Witling*, for his Folly (as it was then thought) in giving out Premiums for the Refusal of

South-

South-Sea Stock at an extravagant Price: The Beau being piqued to an intemperance to see his Bargains a Jest, offer'd in Heat of Blood, to back his Judgment with more Money, for a harder Bargain, and ten times as chimerical.

Char. Ay, now let's hear.

Fran. Thus it was: He told an hundred Guineas into your Father's hand; in consideration of which, (if *Witling* could prove himself worth Fifty Thousand Pounds within the Year, and the *South-Sea* Stock should in that time mount to a thousand *per Cent.* why then, and on those Conditions only) your Father was to give him the Refusal of you, or your Sister, in Marriage. This whimsical Offer turn'd the Laugh of the Company to the Beau's side, at which Sir *Gilbert*, impatient of his Triumph, and not being in the least apprehensive either of the Stocks rising to that Price, or that this Rattle-headed Fellow could possibly make such a Fortune in that time; fairly took the Money, and sign'd the Contract. Now the Stock, it seems, is come up to his Price, and the Spark has actually proved himself worth near double the Sum he condition'd for.

Char. For Heaven's sake! am I to take all this seriously?

Fran. Upon my Life 'tis true: But don't mistake the Matter; Sir *Gilbert* has left his Daughters inclinations free: there is no Force to be put upon them in the Bargain.

Char. Oh! then I can take my Breath again.

Fran. No, no; you are safe as to that Point. You may do as you please; he has only tied up his own Consent. But *Witling* having this Call upon it, Sir *Gilbert* is incapable, as he says, of giving it at present to me.

Char. Well! but in the mean Time, suppose he should give it to you; what's the Penalty?

Fran. That's true; I had like to have forgot it: The Penalty is this; if Sir *Gilbert* refuses his Consent, then he is to give *Witling* an Alternative of the three thousand Pound Stock only, at two hundred. So low it seems was the Price when this Bargain was made.

Char. A pinching Article: I am afraid my good Father has not Dis taste enough for a Coxcomb, to part with

with his Stock, and not tofs him a Daughter into the Bargain.

Fran. Ay, but confider; Sir *Gilbert* is not to part with his Stock neither, if you refuse to marry the Gentleman.

Char. Why then the Fool has given his Money for nothing; at least I am sure he has, if he makes his Call upon me.

Fran. Ay, but here's the Misfortune; the Fool has been wise enough to do that already; Sir *Gilbert* tells me, he has infisted upon you; and you may be sure my Lady, and your Sister, will do all in their Power to hold your Father to his Bargain: So that, while the Contract's valid, it will not be even in your Power, *Charlotte*, to complete my Happiness this half Year.

Char. It gives me at least Occasion to shew you a new Proof of my Inclination; for I confess, I shall be as uneasy as you, till, one Way or other, this ridiculous Bargain is out of that Coxcomb's Hands again.

Fran. O! *Charlotte*! lay your Hand upon my Heart, and feel how sensibly it thanks you.

Char. Foolish!

Sophronia enters, as looking for her Handkerchief, and observes them.

Soph. Monstrous! actually embracing him! What have her Transports made her blind too? Sure she might see me.

Char. Be you but rul'd, and I'll engage to manage it.

Fran. I have a lucky Thought, that certainly—

Char. Peace! break thee off! Lo! where it comes again.

Fran. Speak to it, *Horatio*— [seeing *Soph.*

Char. Do you want any Thing, Sister?

Soph. Ay! did not I drop an Handkerchief here?

Char. I did not see any—O! here—I believe this is it. [gives it her.

[*They all stand gravely mute for some Time, at last Charlotte, as uneasy at her Company, speaks*].

Char. Do you want any Thing else, Sister?

Soph. (*Turning short upon her*)—Yes, Madam—Patience—to support me under your injurious Assurance.

Char. Keep your Temper, Sister, lest I should suspect your

your Philosophy to be only an Affectation of Knowledge you never could arrive at.

Soph. There are some Surprizes, Madam, too strong for all the Guards of human Constancy.

Char. Yet I have heard you say, Madam, 'tis a Narrowness of Mind to be surpriz'd at any Thing.

Soph. To be amaz'd at the Actions of the Unjust, and the Abandon'd, is a Weakness that often arises from Innocence and Virtue : You must therefore pardon me, if I am astonish'd at your Behaviour.

Fran. So ! I suppose I shall have my Share presently : *(Aside.*

Char. My Behaviour, Madam, is not to be aspers'd by Outrage ; and if I am not astonish'd at your's, 'tis because the Folly of it ought to move no Passion but Laughter.

Soph. This to me ! to me ! Mrs. Charlotte ?

Char. Ay, ay ! to you, Mrs. Sophronia.

Fran. I beg your Pardon, Ladies, I see you have private Business. *(going.*

Soph. No, Sir,—hold !—you are at least an Accomplish'd, if not the Principal in the Injury I complain of.

Fran. You do me a great deal of Honour, Madam, in supposing any Thing in my Power could disturb you ; but, pray, madam, wherein have I been so unhappy as to injure you ?

Soph. In the tenderest Part ; my Fame, my Sense, my Merit, and (as the World esteems it) in my Sex's Glory.

Fran. Accumulated Wrongs indeed ! But really, Madam, I am yet in the Dark ; I must beg you to explain a little farther.

Soph. Then plainly thus, Sir : You have robb'd me of my Right ; the Vows of Love you once prefer'd to me are, by the Laws of Honour, without my Consent, irrevocable ; but, like a vile Apostate, you have since presum'd to throw your scornful Malice on my Attractions, by basely kneeling to another.

Char. O ! the painful Conflicts of Prudery. *[Aside.*

Fran. This is hard indeed, Madam, that the Loss of what you never thought worth your Acceptance, should be worth your Resentment. If a Beggar should ask you Charity,

Charity, would you call it an Injury, if, upon refusing it, the Wretch should beg of the next Passenger?

Char. Well! is not that prettily said now, Sister?

Soph. The Case is different—You owe me Tribute as your rightful Conqueror; and tho' I have declin'd the tasteless Triumph of your Homage, that's no Remittance of the Duty: Nor can you pay it to the Usurper of my Right, without rebellious Perjury to me.

Fran. Hoyty! toyttoy! I gad there will be no End of this—I must e'en talk downright to her. [*Aside.*]

Soph. Oblations vow'd to a peculiar Power, are to its peculiar Altars only due; and tho' the Offering might be ill receiv'd, yet should the murmuring Suppliant dare to invoke another's Aid, his Vows are then become profane and impious to the Deity.

Char. So! since he would not make her a Goddess, I find she's resolv'd to make one of herself. [*Aside.*]

Fran. Now really, Madam, if I were to put all this into plain *English*, the Translation would amount to no more than this, That your offended Deity is a mere Dog in a Manger: What the Duce, because you don't love Oats, must nobody else eat them! Ha! ha!

Char. Ha! ha! ha!

Soph. Amazement! Horror! I am shock'd and shiver'd to a thousand Atoms! O! my violated Honour!

Fran. Ay, ay! Madam, you may give yourself as many romantic Airs as you please; but, in short, I can play the civil Hypocrite no longer.

Soph. Ye Powers! he triumphs in Brutality!

Fran. That is, Madam, because you will always take Civility for Adoration. But however, to clear up this whole Matter, if, for once, you can reduce yourself from a Deity to what Nature has made you, a Woman of Sense, I'll beg Pardon for my Brutality, and speak to you like a Gentleman.

Soph. You may suppose me then to have the Sense you speak of.

Fran. Why then I own, Madam, when I first came from Travel, my good Father, on whom I then depended, recommended me to an Alliance in this Family: I thought myself honour'd in his Commands; and being equally a Stranger to you and your Sister, I
judg'd,

judg'd, as being the elder, you had a natural Right to the Preference of my Addresses: I saw you, saw your Person lovely, adorn'd with all those Charms that usually inspire the Lover's Tongue to bend the Ear of Beauty——

Char. How she drops her Eyes at it! [*Aside.*

Fran. But on a nearer Converse, I found you scarce a Mortal in your Sentiments; so utter a Disdain of Love had you imbib'd from your romantick Education: No Wonder I succeeded not; I shall not reproach you with my peculiar Treatment: You pleas'd yourself, and I retreated. On this I thought my Heart at Liberty to try its better Fortune here. Here I am fix'd, and justify my Love; where then's the Injury to you, in laying at your Sister's Feet a Heart which your Disdain rejected?

Soph. 'Tis true, while offer'd with impure Desires; while sensually, and as a Woman only, you pursu'd me: But had you greatly sought the Marriage of the Mind, the social Raptures of the Soul, I might perhaps have cherish'd an intellectual Union.

Fran. Ah! but dear, dear Madam, those Raptures in the Air would not do my Business; I want an Heir to my Family, and, in plain Terms, my Case requires one that will give a little bodily Help to it.

Soph. Nay then, again I must disclaim you; a Heart so tainted would but sully the Receiver: The Shrine's dishonour'd by a polluted Sacrifice.

Char. So! she's at her old Flights again. [*Aside.*

Soph. Thus then I fly for ever from your Hopes——

*Thus Daphne triumph'd o'er Apollo's Flame,
And to his Heav'n preferr'd a Virgin's Name:
The vanquish'd God pursu'd, but to despair,
While deathless Laurels crown'd the flying Fair.*

[*Exit.*

Fran. So! there's one Plague over: I have discharg'd my Conscience upon her at least.

Char. Ha! ha! what a pretty Way, though, my good Sister has of turning a Slight into a Triumph! But she has a great Heart.

Fran. O! 'twould be hard to deny her that Satisfaction; beside, the greatest Heart in the World did just the

the same: We have known the late Grand Monarch lose many a Battle; but it was bloody hard to beat him out of a *Te Deum*.

Char. Well, but now, how shall we manage my Father?

Fran. Here he comes.

Enter Sir Gilbert.

Sir Gilb. So, Mr. *Frankley*! you see I give you fair Play—and troth! I have a great Respect for you—But—a—a Bargain's a Bargain; if another Man has really paid for my Consent, you must not take it ill if I don't refuse him.

Fran. I can't pretend to ask it, Sir; I think it Favour enough, if you don't oblige your Daughter to refuse me.

Sir Gilb. Not I, not I, Man; that's out of the Question: She may please herself; and if *Witling* should not please her, troth! I can't say it would not please me too: In short, if you two have Wit enough to make up the Difference, and bring me off—why there's no more to be said—if not—Accounts must be made up—I have taken the Premium, and must stand to my Contract: For let me tell you, Sir, we Citizens are as tender of our Credit in *Change-Alley*, as you fine Gentlemen are of your Honour at Court.

Fran. Sir, depend upon it, your Credit shall not suffer by me, whatever it may by your Comparifon.

Sir Gilb. Why, what ails the Comparifon? Sir, I think the Credit of the City may be compared to that of any Body of Men in *Europe*.

Fran. Yes, Sir; but you mistake me: I question if any Bodies may be compared to that of the City.

Sir Gilb. O! your humble Servant, Sir; I did not take you—Ay, ay, you're right! you're right; Ay, ay, ay, live and learn, Mr. *Frankley*: You'll find, 'tis not your Court, but City Politicians must do the Nation's Business at last. Why, what did your Courtiers do all the two last Reigns, but borrow Money to make War, and make War to make Peace, and make Peace to make War? And then to be Bullies in one, and Bubbles in t'other: A very pretty Account truly; but we have made Money, Man; Money! Money! there's the Health

Health and Life-Blood of a Government: And therefore I insist upon't, that we are the wisest Citizens in *Europe*; for we have coin'd more Cash in an Hour than the Tower of *London* in twenty Years.

Fran. Nay, you govern the World now, it's plain, Sir; and truly that makes us hope it's upon the mending Hand: For since our Men of Quality are got so thick into *Change-Ally*, who knows but in time a great Man's Word may go as far as a Tradesman's!

Sir Gilb. Ah! a Wag! a Wag! In troth, Mr. *Frankley*, the more I know you, the more I like you: I see you know the World, you judge of Men by their intrinsic Value; and you're right! you're right! Titles are empty things: A wise Man will always be a wise Man, whether he has any Title or no.

Fran. Ay, ay, Sir, and when a Fool gets one, he's only known to be a greater Fool.

Sir Gilb. You're right again: besides, Sir, shall any Man value himself upon a thing, that another may buy for his Money as well as he? Ridiculous ——— a very pretty Business truly, to give ten or twenty thousand Pounds, only to be called out of one's Name: Ha! ha! ha!

Fran. Nay, Sir, and perhaps too, lose the Privilege of a private Subject, that of being believed upon your Honour, or trusted upon your Word.

Sir Gilb. Honour's a Joke! Is not every honest Man a Man of Honour?

Fran. Ay, but the best Joke is, that every Man of Honour is not an honest Man, Sir.

Sir Gilb. Odsbodlikins, Mr. *Frankley*, you are an ingenious Gentleman, and I must have you into my Family, thought it cost me twenty thousand Pounds to keep that pragmatical Fellow out on't.

Fran. If I have any pretence to your Favour, Sir, I will take care your Family shall not suffer by my coming into it; for if the worst must happen, 'tis but waiting till the other half Year of *Willing's* Contract is expir'd. I dare answer your Daughter won't run away with him in the mean time.

Sir Gilb. Ay, but there's the Question: Is the Girl saunch? Are you sure now, that, like a young Hound, she

she may not gallop away with the rank Scent of a Coxcomb, and so spoil your Sport?

Fran. I dare say she'll take this Fear for a Favour—best examine her yourself, Sir.

Sir Gilb. Come hither, *Charlotte*.

Char. Your Pleasure, Sir?

Sir Gilb. Are you sure you are as wise as other fine Ladies of your Age, that know more of Mankind than their Fathers, and consequently have a natural Aversion to all Husbands of their chusing? In short, have you learnt enough of the World to be heartily disobedient upon Occasion.

Char. When you please to give me the Occasion, Sir, I will try what I can do.

Sir Gilb. Humh! she promises fair. [*To Frankley aside.* The Girl has Wit——But now, Child, the Question is, whether you have common Sense or no (for they don't always go together) are you smoky? Have you all your Eye-teeth yet? Are you peery, as the Cant is? In short, do you know what I would be at now?

Char. Will you give Leave to guess, Sir?

Sir Gilb. Out with it.

Char. Why then (I hope at least, Sir) you have a mind to make *Witling* believe, you are doing all in your Power to bring his Bargain to bear; and at the same Time wish I would do all in my Power to bring it to nothing.

Sir Gilb. [*Aside.*] It will do! it will do! Mr. *Frankley*, tell her she's right; you know it is not honest for me to say so: a hum!

Char. In short, Sir, if you'll leave the Matter to my Discretion, I'll engage to bring you off.

Sir Gilb. Bring me off, Hussy! why; have you the Confidence to suppose I won't do the fair Thing by the Gentleman?

Char. I have not the Confidence to suppose you would do a hard Thing by this Gentleman, indeed, Papa!

[*Takes Frankley's Hand.*

Sir Gilb. D'ye hear! d'ye hear! what a sensible Assurance the Slut has! Ah! it's a wheedling Toad! [*Aside.* Adud! I'll have a little more of her——But do you know, Lady, that Mr. *Witling* has demanded my Consent, and
that

that it would cost me above twenty thousand Pounds to refuse it?

Char. Yes, Sir, I do know it; and if I were to give him my Consent, I know I should have made the worst Bargain of the two.

Sir Gilb. Your Consent! Why sure, Madam, when I say, do so, do you pretend to have a Will of your own?

Char. Umh! a leetle! a small Pulse, you know, Papa.

[*Fawning on Sir Gilb.*]

Sir Gilb. Ah! the coaxing Gipsy! why you Confident, abominable—Odshheart! I could kiss her—

Fran. Faith! do, Sir, that's no Breach of your Contract.

Sir Gilb. No! no! that's not fair neither, I am to be angry with her—besides I don't keep my word, if I don't speak a good one for him.

Char. That's not in your power, Sir; 'tis impossible any body can give him a good word, at least to me.

Sir Gilb. How! how! will not a handsome young Fellow, with an hundred thousand Pounds in his Pocket, go down with you? Will not a full Plumb melt in your Mouth, Mistress Dainty?

Char. Thank you, Sir; but I don't love Trash!

Sir Gilb. Trash! Mr. *Witling*, Trash!

Char. A Coxcomb.

Sir Gilb. I say he is——

Char. My Averfion.

Sir. Gilb. Bear witness, Mr. *Frankley*, she refuses him; you see all I say signifies nothing; But I say again and again, that I'm resolv'd, Madam, you shall marry him, and that Articles shall be drawn this very Morning.

Char. But do you think you can't persuade him to stay a little, Sir?

Sir. Gilb. Stay! yes; yes; a reasonable time, that is.

Char. You'll think it a reasonable one, I am sure, Sir.

Sir. Gilb. Well! well! how long?

Char. Only till I have done hating him, that's all.

Sir. Gilb. Pfhah! fiddle fiddle! marry him first, and you will have time enough to hate him afterwards.

Char. Well, Sir, then I have but one Favour to beg of you——

Sir

Sir Gilb. Come, what is't ? what is't ?

Char. Only, Sir, that in the Draught of the Articles you will be pleas'd to leave a Blank for the Gentleman's Name; and if I don't fill it up to your Mind, say I know nothing of my own.

Sir Gilb. Fie ! fie ! you wicked Thing you——*Mr. Frankley*, it will do ! it will do ! the Girl has all her Goings ! keep her right, keep her right, and tight ; and I'll warrant thee all safe, Boy.

Fran. Never fear, Sir—Now there's but one Difficulty behind ; were it but possible to make my Lady our Friend in this Matter——

Sir Gilb. Pshaw ! waw ! never mind her : Am not I Master of my own Family ? Does not she know that my Will's a Law ? And if I once say the Word——

Fran. That's true, Sir ; but, you know, one would not make her a needless Enemy : She'll think herself affronted, take it as an Insult to her Understanding, not to be let into the Secret at all.

Char. Indeed, Sir, I am afraid we shall have a foul House, if she is not consulted in this Business.

Sir Gilb. Nay, nay, with all my Heart ; but the foolish Woman always loves to dispute about nothing, and such a Spirit of Contradiction runs away with her, I had as lief sit in the Stocks as talk to her : However, for your private Satisfaction——

Fran. Indeed, Sir, I think it will be better so.

Sir Gilb. Well ! well ! then I'll tell her my Resolution instantly.

Char. Ah ! poor Papa ! what a wicked Distress have we brought him to ? Now will he rather run upon the Mouth of a Cannon, than let us see he is afraid of Gunpowder.

Fran. How my Lady will bounce when he mentions it !

[*Aside.*

Sir Gilb. O ! here's my Lady, I'll speak to her now.

Fran. If you please, we'll retire, that you may have no Interruption.

Sir Gilb. Do so, you're right, you're right.

[*Exit Fran. and Char.*

Enter Lady Wrangle, driving a Maid-servant in before her.

L. *Wr.* Out of my Doors, you Dunce! you illiterate Monster! What! could not you read? Could not you spell? Where were your Eyes, you brainless Idiot?

Sir *Gilb.* Hey-day! hey-day! what's the matter now?

L. *Wr.* Go! You eleventh Plague of *Egypt*.

Maid. Indeed, Madam, I did not know it was of any Use; it was so blotted and blurred, I took it for waste Paper.

L. *Wr.* Blurred! you Driveler! was ever any Piece perfect, that had not Corrections, Rasures, Interlineations and Improvements? Does not the very Original shew, that when the Mind is warmest, it's never satisfied with its Words?

*Incipit, & dubitat; scribit, damnatque tabellas,
Et notat, & delct; mutat, culpatque probatque.*

Sir *Gilb.* O Lord! Now the learned Fit's upon her, the Devil won't be able to deal with her. [*Aside.*

L. *Wr.* What have you done with it, you Dolthead? where is it? Fetch it, let me see it, I say.

Sir *Gilb.* Pray, my Lady *Wrangle*, what is all this Rout about?

L. *Wr.* O! nothing to be sure! I am always unreasonable.

Sir *Gilb.* Why look you now, did I say any such Thing?

L. *Wr.* I don't care if you did.

Sir *Gilb.* It's very hard a Man may not ask a civil Question in his own House.

L. *Wr.* Ay, do, side with her, take her Part; do, do, uphold her in her Impudence.

Sir *Gilb.* Why, my Lady, did I say a Word to her?

L. *Wr.* Pray, Mr. *Wrangle*, give me Leave to govern my own Servants—Don't you know, when I am out of Temper, I won't be talk'd to?—Have not I Plague enough here, do you think?

Sir *Gilb.* Why, ay, that's true too—why, you confident Jade! how dare you put my Lady into such a violent Passion?

Maid. Indeed, Sir, I don't know, not I.

[*whimpering.*

L. *Wr.* Pray, Mr. *Wrangle*, meddle with your own Business

Business—the Fault's to me, and, sure I am old enough to correct her myself.

Sir *Gilb.* Why, what a dickens, mayn't I be of your Mind neither? 'Sheart! I can't be in the Wrong on both Sides.

L. *Wr.* I don't know any Business you have on either Side.

Sir *Gilb.* Nay, if a Man must not speak at all, it's another Case.

L. *Wr.* Lord! you are strangely teizing—well, come speak—what! what! what is't you would say now?

Sir *Gilb.* Nay, nothing, not I; I only ask what's the Matter?

L. *Wr.* I can't tell you, the Provocation's too great for Words.

Sir *Gilb.* Well! well! well!

L. *Wr.* What here still? Am I to have no Account of it then? What have you done with it, you Monster?

Maid. Madam, the Cook took it out of my Hand, as I was coming down Stairs with it; he said he wanted it.

L. *Wr.* The Cook! run! fly, and bid the Villain send it me this Moment. [Exit Maid.

Sir *Gilb.* Why, what the dickens! the senseless Jade has not given him a *Flanders-lac'd* Head to boil his Cabbage in, has she?

L. *Wr.* Pshaw! do you ever see me concern'd for such Trifles?

Sir *Gilb.* Or has she let the Rascal finge his Fowls with a Bank Bill?

L. *Wr.* If she had, do you think I would give myself such Pain about that either?

Sir *Gilb.* Hah! this must be some abominable Thing indeed then.

L. *Wr.* The Loss, for ought I know, may be irreparable.

Sir *Gilb.* Oh! then she has lost your Diamond Necklace, I suppose.

L. *Wr.* Pray don't plague me, 'tis impossible to express the Wickedness of it.

Sir *Gilb.* What, the Devil! the Cook has not got the Slut with Child, has he?

L. *Wr.* Worse! worse a thousand times.

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Sir Gilb. Worse! what than playing the Whore, or Thief? then the Jade has certainly committed Murder.

L. Wr. The most barbarous that ever was—

Sir Gilb. Hoh! then she has broke Pug's Neck, to be sure. [*Aside.*

L. Wr. The Changeling Innocent has given that savage Beast, the Cook, my whole new Translation of the Passion of *Byblis* for waste Paper, to be torn or tortur'd to a thousand fordid Uses.

Sir Gilb. Nay then——

L. Wr. And I have not another Copy in the World, if it were to save Mankind from Extirpation.

Sir Gilb. I'm glad on't with all my Heart; now could I laugh (if I durst) most immoderately. [*Aside.*

L. Wr. Now, Mistress! have you brought it?

Re-ent'r Maid.

Maid. Madam, the Cook says, he has skewer'd it on the Roast-beef, and he can't take it off—he won't burn his Meat for no body, not he, he says.

L. Wr. Here! call the Footmen: He won't! bid them drag the Rascal hither by the Ears, or I'll have them nail'd down to the Dresser for his Impudence—I'll turn the Villain out of my House this Moment.

[*Exit Maid.*

Sir Gilb. Come, come, my Lady, don't be in a Heat about a Trifle; I am glad to find it's no worse.

L. Wr. Worse! had he robb'd the House, and after fir'd it, I could sooner have forgiven him.

Sir Gilb. Hah! thank you for that, Madam, but I should not.

L. Wr. You! You should not! What would be your Injury compar'd to mine? What I'm concern'd for, the whole learned World, even to Posterity, may feel the Loss of.

Sir Gilb. Well! well! have a little Patience; may be she may get it again. And now you talk of Posterity, my Lady *Wrangle*, I have some Thoughts of marrying my Daughter *Charlotte*; as for *Sophronia*, you know—

L. Wr. I know, that one won't, and t'other shan't marry; she is a pert forward Thing, and has disoblig'd me, and therefore I'll punish her as I think fit—I desire you won't name her to me, you see I have other Things
in

in my Head : All greas'd, and burnt to Ashes, I suppose.

Sir *Gilb.* I had better talk to her another Time, I believe.

Enter several Servants with the Cook.

L. *Wr.* O! are you come at last, Sir? Pray, how durst you send me such an impudent Answer?

Cook. I did not send an impudent Answer, Madam; I only said the Meat would be spoil'd : But here she comes, and makes a Noise, and a Rout, and a Clatter about nothing at all—and so every impudent Jade here takes upon her—Oons! a Man can't do his Business in quiet for them.

L. *Wr.* Hold your nonsensical Tongue, Sir, and give me the Paper I sent for.

Cook. Paper! This is what she gave me.

[Holds it on a Skewer, all greasy.]

L. *Wr.* O my Heavens! what a Spectacle! not one Line legible, though an Empire were to purchase it. Look! look! look! you Monster. *[Holding him.]*

Sir *Gilb.* So! here will be rare Doings.

Cook. Oons! what a Life's here about a Piece of foul Paper?

L. *Wr.* A Life, you Villain! your whole Life can't make me Amends for what you have done — I'll have you beat out of this House, till every Bone in your Body's broke for this, Sirrah.

Cook. Beat! Madam, Blood! I won't be beat—I did not come here for that—I'll be out of your House presently—I'll see who will break my Bones then—and so there's one of your Napkins, Madam; as for your Sheet of Paper, there's a Halfpenny for't; and now take your Course—I know how to get my Wages, I'll warrant you—There's Law for Servants as well as other People. *[Exit Cook.]*

Sir *Gilb.* Go! go! mind your Business, you silly Tom Ladle you.

L. *Wr.* Ay! this is always the Effect of your Indulgence; no Wonder I have no Power over them; if you had the least Grain of Spirit, you would have broke the Rascal's Head for me.

Sir *Gilb.* Pshah! there's no Occasion for it—let's see! let's

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let's see—[*Takes up the Paper.*] Come, come, this Matter may be made up without Bloodshed still—ay, here! umh, umh—by the Way I believe this Beef's enough, it smells bravely of the Gravy.

L. Wr. What! then I am your Jest, it seems.

Sir Gilb. Pooh! prithee be quiet, I tell you I am serious—ay! it's plain to be read still. [*Reads.*]

All a poor Maid could do (the Gods, I'm sure,

Can tell) I've suffer'd to compleat my Cure—Cure!

Hah, poor Soul—got the foul Disease, I suppose.

L. Wr. Your obscene Comment, *Mr. Wrangle*, is more provoking than the Insolence of your Servants: But I must tell you, Sir, I will never eat or sleep in your House more, if that Rascal is not turn'd out of it this Moment.

Maid. I hope your Ladyship is not in earnest, Madam.

L. Wr. What do you prate, *Mrs. Minx*?

Maid. Indeed, Madam, if *John's* to be turn'd away, I shan't stay in the Family; for tho' he is sometimes a little hasty to a body, yet I have Reason to know he is an honest-hearted Man in the main; and I have too much Kindness for him to stay in any Service, where he is to be abused.

L. Wr. What, you are in love with him, *Mrs. Trollop*, are you? [*Cuffs her.*]

Maid. Ods my Life, Madam, I won't be struck by nobody; and if I do love him, what's that to any body? and I don't know why poor Folks mayn't be in love as well as their Betters.

Sir Gilb. Come! come! hold your Tongue, Hussy.

Maid. Sir, I can't hold my Tongue; tho' I can't say but your Worship's a very kind Master: But as for my Lady, the Devil would not live with her; and so, Madam, I desire you will provide yourself. [*Flings off.*]

Sir Gilb. Odzines, Madam, at this Rate I shall have neither Dinner to eat, nor Bed to lie on; What Servants will bear this Life, do you think? You have no more Temper than a——Why how should a silly Wench know what your impertinent Poetry was good for?

L. Wr. Impertinent! I'd have you know, *Mr. Ignorant*, there's not a Line in the whole, that has not the true Attick Salt in it.

Sir

Sir *Gilb.* Well! and now there's *English* Salt in it; and, I think, the Relish of one's as good as t'other.

L. *Wr.* Mr. *Wrangle*, if you have no Sense of the Soul's diviner Faculties, know I have, and can resent these vulgar Insults. You shall find, Sir, that a superior Understanding has a proportion'd Spirit to support its Dignity. Let me have instant Reparation, or, by my injur'd Genius, I'll set your House and Family in a Blaze.

[*Exit L. Wr.*]

Sir *Gilb.* Why, then, blaze and burn by yourself; for I'll go out of the House. [*Going off he is met by Frankley and Charlotte.*]

Fran. Have you seen, my Lady, Sir?

Sir *Gilb.* Yes, yes, I have seen her—but—I don't know—she—she—

Fran. Don't come into it, I suppose.

Sir *Gilb.* Umh! no, not readily—in short, the House is all untiled.

Char. Lord, Sir, what filthy Thing's this?

[*Seeing the Paper.*]

Sir *Gilb.* Ay, there's the Business—a Brat of my Lady's Brain, that has got a Mischance; that's all.

Fran. Some roasted Poetry, I presume.

Sir *Gilb.* Ay, Ay; the, the, the Passion of *Bibble-babble*; I don't know what she calls it; But she has been in such a Fume here, that half the Servants are going to leave the House about it—*Charlotte*, you can wheedle upon Occasion, prithee step into the Hall, and see if you can make up this matter among them.

Char. I'll do my best, Sir.

[*Exit Char.*]

Fran. Poor Lady! she is a little apt to be over-concern'd for her Poetry.

Sir *Gilb.* Concern'd! Odsblews! if a Line on't happens to be mislaid, she's as mad as a blind Mare that has lost her Foal; she'll run her Head against a Stone-wall to recover it: All the use I find of her Learning is, that it furnishes her with more words to scold with.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, Mr. *Granger's* come, and Mr. *Witling*.

Sir *Gilb.* O! that's well! come, Mr. *Frankley*, let's all go into the Dining-room together; mayhap, she may be asham'd to be in a Passion before Company.

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Fran. At least we may keep her within Bounds, Sir.
Sir Gib. You're right! you're right! Ah! it's a very hard Case! there's no Condition of Life without Plague and Trouble——Why, most People think, now, I have Fortune enough to make ten Men of Quality happy.

And yet you see how oddly Things are carry'd;

'Tis true, I'm worth a Million—but I'm marry'd.

[Exit.]

A C T I V.

Granger and Frankley.

Fran. **I**N one Word, *Granger*, thou art a very dangerous Fellow; I did not believe it possible thy blunt Humour could have conceal'd so exquisite a Flatterer: Why thou art more in my Lady's Favour in half an Hour, than all my Art could make me in half a Year.

Gran. Have I not always told you, *Frankley*, that one civil Thing from a downright Dealer, goes farther than a thousand from a Man of general Complaisance? How do you think I first gain'd Credit with *Sophronia*? Not (as you expected to do it) by an implicit Admiration; but the contrary, insolently laughing at her. pretending to Principles, which I would not allow her capable to comprehend or practise. Now this naturally piqued her into an Impatience to mend my Opinion of her; so the more difficult I seem'd to be convinc'd of her Virtues, the more easy I made it to mend her Opinion of me.

Fran. And if thou hast not done it effectually, I know nothing of the Sex: Why she blush'd, Man, like a Damask Rose, when you first came into the Room.

Gran. Did not I tell you too, her Quarrel and Spleen to you would be of Service to me?

Fran. O! palpably! I was ready to burst to see her bridle, and smile at me, upon your growing particular to her.

Gib.

Gran. And what pains she took, to make you observe that she overlook'd you ? ha ! ha !

Fran. Yes I did observe, indeed, that the whole Dinner-time she was never two Minutes without stealing a Glance at you.

Gran. O blefs me ! I can't bear the insolence of my own Imagination ! What a dear Confusion will she feel ? What a Vermilion Shame will spread th'rough all that lovely Form — if ever her Flesh and Blood should happen to mutiny ?

Fran. Which, to tell you the Truth, I think it does already.

Gran. But the misfortune is, I have flatter'd my Lady into so good a Humour, by engaging to make out a fair Copy of her basted Verses there, that I doubt, she won't be able to leave me alone with *Sophronia*.

Fran. Never fear ; her Malice is too busy, in setting up *Witling* against me, to interrupt you.

Gran. There indeed I have some hopes.

Fran. I believe I shall be able to assist them, and in part to return the Favour you have done me with Sir Gilbert.

Gran. Any thing in my power you may be sure of— but see, he's here !

Enter Sir Gilbert.

Sir Gilb. O ! your Servant, Gentlemen : I thought we had lost you.

Gran. Your Pardon, Sir, we had only a word or two in private.

Fran. We were just coming into the Company.

Sir Gilb. In troth, and I can tell you, the sooner the better ; for there's my Lady and *Charlotte* are going to play all the Game upon us.

Fran. Never fear, Sir ; as long as you have given me Leave to go *Charlotte's* halves, she'll make the most of her Cards, I'll warrant you.

Sir Gilb. I don't know that, but I am sure *Witling* yonder is making the most of his time : his Wit, or his Impudence have got him into such high Favour with my Lady, that she is railing at you like a Fury, and crying him up for an Angel : In short, *Charlotte* has discover'd all your Affair with her, and has plainly told

him you are his Rival. But it seems, Sir, your Pretensions are so ridiculous, that they are all three cracking their sides in a full Chorus of laughing at you.

Fran. Sir, I am oblig'd to you for your Concern; but in all this, *Charlotte* is acting no wrong part, I can assure you.

Sir Gilb. No wrong part? Odheart! I tell you she's coquetting to him, with every wicked Limb about her--and is as full of her *Airs* there, as a handsome Widow to a young Lord in the *Lobby*, when she has a Suit depending in the House of *Peers*.

Fran. Better still, the more likely to carry her Cause, Sir.

Sir Gilb. Carry her Cause! carry her Coxcomb, Sir; for you'll see, that will be the end on't: she'll be carry'd off herself, Sir. Why, Man, he is going to beleaguer her with a whole Army of Fiddlers yonder; there are fix Coach-loads of them now at the Door, all stow'd fore and aft, with nothing but Cases of Instruments: Such a Concourse of Cat-guts, you'd swear one of their squaling Eunuchs were roasting alive here.

Fran. Believe me, Sir, there is no Terror in all this Preparation; for since you are pleased to think Mr. *Granger's* Security and mine sufficient against any Damage you can suffer from your Contract with *Witling*, do you but stand it out stoutly with my Lady, and I'll engage to dismount his musical Battery with a Child's Whistle.

Sir Gilb. My Lady! Pshah! waw! What dost talk of her, Man? Why I tell you, I'll put her into a Mouse-hole, provided you engage to bring me off with *Witling*.

Fran. Your Security shall be sign'd the minute it can be drawn, Sir.

Sir Gilb. That's enough; I have order'd my Lawyer to send his Clerk with it, before he brings the Deed of Consent that I am to sign to *Witling*: But give me leave to tell you again, Gentlemen, I really don't understand the Girl's way of proceeding all this while.

Fran. Why, Sir—don't you know that *Witling* is the vainest Rogue upon Earth?

Sir Gilb. I grant it.

Fran.

Fran. And consequently, that the Pride of outwitting you in your Daughter, gives him more Pleasure than either her Person or her Portion?

Sir Gilb. Not unlikely.

Fran. And can you think, that from the same natural Insolence, he would not rather seem to owe his Triumph over a Rival too, rather to his own Merit, than any Accident of Fortune?

Sir Gilb. I grant you that too.

Fran. Why then, Sir, if *Charlotte* were to despise him, we are sure he would then insist upon his Bargain; but while she flatters him, and you and I only laugh at him, he may be vain enough to trust his Triumph to her Choice and Inclination only.

Sir Gilb. O! now I begin to take you: So that, if he is rightly handled among us, you propose that *Charlotte* will be able to coquette him out of his Contract.

Fran. Nay, it's her own Project, Sir; and I cant really think we have an ill Chance for it at worst: But we must leave it all to her now. In Love-Affairs, you know, Sir, Women have generally wiser Heads than we.

Sir Gilb. Troth, I don't wholly dislike it; and if I don't handle him roundly on my part——

Gran. Hush! my Lady——

Fran. Anon I'll tell you more, Sir.

Enter Lady Wrangle and Sophronia.

L. Wr. Well, *Sophronia*, since I see this giddy Girl is neither to be form'd by Precept or Example; it's at least some Consolation, to find her natural Inconstancy so effectually mortifies that vile Apostate, *Frankley*.

Soph. Yet I am amaz'd he should not be more mov'd at her Infidelity.

L. Wr. You know he's vain, and thinks his Merit may sleep in full Security. But now! to rouse him from his Dream——O! Mr. *Granger*! I am sorry you left us; I am perfectly kill'd with Laughing! There's Mr. *Willing* has had such infinite Humour! He has entertain'd us more than ten Comedies.

Gran. O! Pray, Madam, let us go in and participate.

L. Wr. By no means; he's now alone with his Mistrefs, and 'twould be barbarous to interrupt them.

Gran.

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Gran. His Mistress, Madam !

L. Wr. Ay ! with *Charlotte* ; and, you know, Lovers so near their Happiness are apt to like no Company so well as their own.

Fran. D'ye hear, Sir ?

[*To Sir Gilb. apart.*

Sir Gilb. I told you how it was.

To Fran. apart.

L. Wr. Beside, he is going to give us a little Musick ; and I think this Room will be more convenient.

Gran. He is a fortunate Man indeed, Madam, to be so well with the young Lady already.

L. Wr. There's no accounting for that idle Passion in uncultivated Minds : I am not surpriz'd at her Forwardness, considering the vulgar Education *Mr. Wrangle* has given her.

Sir Gilb. Odfheart, Madam ! don't disparage my Girl : She has had a more useful Education than your Ladyship.

L. Wr. O ! no doubt ! she has shewn most hopeful Effects on't, indeed ! by hanging upon every young Fellow's Neck, that does but ask her the Question.

Fran. Whatever Faults *Charlotte* may have, Madam, I never knew her take pleasure in exposing those of other People.

L. Wr. O ! cry you mercy, Sir ; you have great reason to defend her, I don't question : She is a Saint in your Eye, to be sure.

Fran. Were she weak enough to imagine a superficial Learning could make her one, 'tis possible, her Failings then, like other People's, might have been more conspicuous.

L. Wr. What do you mean, Sir ?

Fran. I mean, Madam, that as she does not read *Aristotle*, *Plato*, *Plutarch*, or *Seneca*, she is neither romantic or vain of her Pedantry ; and as her Learning never went higher than *Bickerstaff's* *Tatlers*, her Manners are consequently natural, modest and agreeable.

Sir Gilb. Ah ! well said, *Frankley*.

[*Aside.*

L. Wr. Since I am told you were once in love with her, I shall say no more, but leave her own immediate Behaviour to confirm your good Opinion of her Virtues.

Ha ! ha !

Gran. While the Lovers of this Age, Madam, have so

so depraved a Taste, we must not wonder, if our modern fine Ladies are apt to run into Coquetry: They are now forced to it in their own Defence; if they don't make Advances, they stand as lonely and useles as untenanted Houses: So that Coquetry, it seems, is no more than setting a Bill upon their Door, that Lovers in Distress may read as they pass—*Here are Nights Lodgings to be let.*

L. Wr. O! they are most hospitable Dames indeed: After this, methinks, the more proper Appellation for Coquettes should be that of Landladies.

[A Servant whispers L. Wr.

I'll come, and give Orders myself. [Exit.

Soph. I don't know any one alive, that looks upon the Degeneracy of Mankind with so discerning an Eye as Mr. Granger; but I am afraid it will therefore draw him into my Misfortune, of being as odious to the illiterate of his Sex, as I am to those of mine.

Gran. If that were as just a Reason, Madam, for your having a favourable Opinion of me, as it is for my perfect Admiration of you, we should each of us have still as many Friends as any wise Man or Woman ought to desire.

Fran. Do you mind that, Sir? [Apart.

Sir Gilb. A sly Rogue! He knows how to tickle her up, I see. [Apart.

Soph. And yet the rude World will say, perhaps, that our mutual Enmity to them has reduc'd us to a Friendship for one another.

Gran. That's a Reproach can never reach you, Madam; so much Beauty cannot but have its Choice of Friends and Admirers; a Form so bright and perfect, like a Comet in the Hemisphere, where-e'er it moves, must set Mankind a gazing.

Soph. Fy! Mr. Granger!

Sir Gilb. What a dickens! will she swallow that blazing Star now? [Apart.

Fran. Ay, as he has dress'd it, and drink after it too, Sir. [Apart.

Soph. I mind not Multitudes.

Gran. Pardon me, I know you have a Soul above them; and I really think it the Misfortune of your Person, to have

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have been so exquisitely fair, that where your Virtue would preserve, your Eyes destroy; they give involuntary Love: where're you pass, in spite of all your Innocence, they wound—*Juvenumque prodis Publica Cura.*

Soph. Alas! my Eyes are turn'd upon myself; and so little do I mind the Follies of other People, that I sometimes find myself alone, in the midst of a Publick Circle.

Gran. I cannot wonder at that, Madam, since our best Assemblies are generally made up of illiterate Beings, that, when they are alone, find themselves in the worst Company; and so are reduced to come abroad, tho' merely to meet, and hate one another.

Soph. What Charms then can you suppose I could have for a World, that has so few for me? Beside, at most, the Men of modern Gallantry gaze upon a Woman of real Virtue, only as Atheists look into a fine Church; from Curiosity, not Devotion: They may admire its Ornaments and Architecture, but have neither Grace nor Faith for farther Adoration.

Gran. All Men are not Infidels: of me, at least, you have a Convert: And tho' the sensual Practice of the World had made me long despair of such Perfection in a mortal Mould: yet, when the Rays of Truth Celestial broke in upon my Sense, my conscious Heart at once confess'd the Deity: I prostrate fell a Profelyte to Virtue; and now, its chaste Desires enlarge my Soul, and raise me to Seraphick Joy.

Soph. Harmonious Sounds! Celestial Transports! [*Aside.*

Sir Gilb. O dear! O dear! was ever such a wicked Thief! Odsheart! he'll make her go to Prayers with him presently. [*Aside.*

Soph. No more—we are observ'd: These Heaven-born Emanations of the Soul desire not vulgar Ears—Some fitter time may offer.—till then—

Gran. Till then—be hush'd our Joys. (*Gran. leaves her, and joins the Men, while Soph. walks apart musing.*)

Soph. Our Joys indeed! such was, in Paradise, our first Parents Joy, before they fell from Innocence to Shame.

Fran. (*To Gran.*) Why did you not go on with her? We thought you were in a fine Way: Sir Gilbert and I were just going to steal off.

Gran.

Gran. Soft and fair, Sir: A Lady of her Delicacy must be carried, like a Taper new lighted, gently forward; if you hurry her——out she goes.

Sir Gilb. You're right, you're right—Now you shall see me manage her a little; I'll speak a good word for you——a hum——

Gran. Hush!—not for the World, Sir—Death! you'll spoil all——don't you see she is in Contemplation?

Sir Gilb. What if she be, Man? we must not humour her, till she is stark mad neither. *Sophronia!* how dost thou do, Child?

Soph. (*Repeating.*)———*The Earth
Gave sign of Gratulation, and each Hill:
Joyous the Birds; fresh Gales and gentle Airs
Whisper'd it to the Woods, and from their Wings
Flung Rose, flung Odours, from the juicy Shrub
Disporting——*

Sir Gilb. Very pretty, I protest; very pretty—These amorous Scraps of fancy in thy Head make me hope, that Love is not far from thy Heart, *Sophy*——

Soph. Love, Sir, was ever in my Heart; but such a Love, as the blind *Homer* of this *British* Isle, in rhymeless Harmony sublimely sings——

Sir Gilb. Well, and prithee what does he say of it?

Soph.———*Love refines
The Thought, and Heart enlarges; has his Seat
In Reason, and is judicious, is the Scale,
By which to Heavenly Love thou mayst ascend.*

Sir Gilb. Very good again; and troth, I'm glad to hear thou art so heartily reconcil'd to it.

Soph. *Easier than Air with Air, if Spirits embrace,
Total they mix, Union of Pure with Pure
Defring——*

Sir Gilb. Ah! there I doubt we are a little crazy.

(*Aside.*

Soph. *This Iron Age, so fraudulent and bold,
Touch'd with this Love, would be an Age of Gold.*

Sir Gilb. O-lud! O-lud! this will never do. (*Aside.*

Gran. So! she has given the old Gentleman his Belly-full, I see: Well, Sir! how do you find her?

Sir Gilb. Ah! poor Soul! pitious bad! All upon the
Tantivy

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Tantivy again! You must e'en undertake her yourself; for I can do no good upon her—But here comes Love of another Kind.

Enter Charlotte, Witling, and Lady Wrangle.

Char. O Sister! here's Mr. *Witling* has writ the prettiest *Cantata* sure, that ever made Musick enchanting.

Soph. I am glad, Sister, you are reconcil'd to any of his Performances.

Wit. O fy! Madam, she only rallies——A mere Trifle.

Fran. That I dare swear it is.

Wit. Ha! ha! no doubt on't; if you could like it, it must be an extraordinary Piece indeed, *Tom.* You see, my little Rogue, we have crabb'd him already.

[*Afide to Char.*

L. Wr. Mr. *Frankley* is a mere modern Critick, that makes personal Inclination the Rule of his Judgment; but to condemn what one never saw, is making short Work indeed.

Fran. With Submission, Madam, I can see no great Rashness in presuming that a Magpye can't sing like a Nightingale.

Wit. No, nor an Owl look like a Peacock neither: Ha! ha!

L. Wr. and *Char.* Ha! ha! ha!

L. Wr. Perfectly pleasant.

Char. O! Wit to an Infinity!

Fran. Much good may do you with your Canary-Bird, Madam.

[*To Char.*

Char. O! Sir, I am sorry you are exhausted; but when Wit's upon the Lee, no Wonder it runs into Rudeness.

Fran. I don't wonder at my not hitting your Taste, Madam, when such Stuff as his can go down with you.

Wit. My Stuff, dear *Tom*, was compos'd purely for the Entertainment of this Lady; and since she likes it, I will allow that you, of all Mankind, have most Reason to find Fault with it. Ha! ha!

Char. Nay, if he should like it, even I will then give it up to the World as good for nothing.

Fran. Then it's in Danger, I can tell you, Madam; for I shall certainly like it, because, I am sure, it will be good for nothing.

Char.

Char. A pleasant Paradox.

Fran. None at all, Madam; for since I find your Heart is like Stock, to be transferr'd upon a Bargain, it will be some Pleasure, at least, to see the Grossness of your Choice revenge me on your Infidelity.

Wit. Poor Tom! what are the Grapes sour, my Dèar? Hah! hah! hah!

Char. Pshan! never mind him: The *Cantata*, dear Mr. *Witling*, the *Cantata*.

L. Wr. O! by all Means; pray oblige us, Sir?

Wit. Immediately, Madam; but all Things in order; first give me leave to regale the good Company with a small Crash of instrumental.

L. Wr. As you please, Sir.

Wit. Hey! Signior Carbonelli! *Vi Piacè d' intrare?*

[*The Musick enter.*]

L. Wr. Mr. Granger, won't you please to sit?

Sir Gilb. Ay, ay, come, Gentlemen; but in earnest, does this Puppy really pretend to sing?

Fran. Much as he pretends to Wit, Sir: He can make a Noise at least.

Sir Gilb. But the Whelp has no Voice.

Fran. O! Sir, that's out of fashion: Your best Masters seldom have any.

Sir Gilb. Then I would not give a Fig for their Musick, Sir; I would as lief see a Cripple dance: But let's hear what the Fiddles can do. [*They play a Sonata.*] Well! and what! we are to suppose this very fine now, hah!

Fran. No doubt on't, Sir! at least it will not be safe to say the contrary.

Sir Gilb. Well! well! for a quiet Life then, very fine let it be: but I wish I could hear a *Lancashire* Horn-pipe for all that.

L. Wr. Come, dear Sir, no more Apologies.

[*To Witling.*]

Gran. See, Sir, Mr. *Witling* is going to entertain us.

Sir Gilb. Ay! that must be rare Stuff indeed.

Wit. Upon my Life, Madam, I have no more Voice than a Kettle-Drum; besides, this is for a Treble, and out of my Compass.

Char. O! no matter; feign it, dear Mr. *Witling*.

Wit.

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Wit. I would fain oblige you, Madam : but yet, methinks, nothing done, to please you, should be feign'd neither, Madam.

Fran. Hah ! he would fain be witty, I see ; but don't trouble yourself, Madam, he has as much mind to sing as you have to hear him : 'Tho', Heaven knows, his Voice is, like his Modesty, utterly forced ; Nature has nothing to do with either of them.

Wit. Whatever my Modesty is, dear *Tom*, thy Uneasiness I am sure is natural ; that comes from thy Heart, I dare answer for it. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Fran. O thou happy Rogue !

Wit. But, Madam, if I sing, you shall promise me to dance then.

Char. O ! any Composition ; I'll do it with all my Heart.

L. Wr. But the Words first ; dear Sir, read them out.

Wit. Well, Ladies, since you must have it——

Sir Gilb. He is a cursed while about it, methinks——

Wit. You must know, then, this *Cantata* is of a different Species from the *Passion* generally express'd in our modern Operas ; for there you see your Lover usually approaches the fair Lady with Sighs, Tears, Torments, and Dying : Now here, I shew you the way of making Love like a pretty Fellow ; that is, like a Man of Sense, all Life and Gaiety—As for Example.

Char. Pray mind.

Wit. (*Reading.*)

*Thus to a pensive Swain,
Who long had lov'd in vain,
Thyrsis the secret Arts
Of gaining Hearts
From cold Disdain,
To his despairing Friend imparts.*

Wit. So far Recitative——Now for the Air——A hum ! hum !

Soph. Don't you think, Mr. *Granger*, that the double Dative Cases of—*to a pensive Swain, to his despairing Friend*, almost reduce this to Nonsense ?

Gran.

The Ladies Philosophy.

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Gran. Justly observ'd, Madam; but you know Non-sense and Harmony are reconciled of late.

Wit. *Would you woo her
With Success?
Up to her,
Pursue her
With Life and Address.*

*If Gay,
Shew her Play;
If colder,
Be bolder:
Now seize her,
And teize her,
And kiss her,
And please her,
'Till ripe for the Joy.
You warm her,
Alarm her,
Disarm her,
You charm her,
I warrant thee, Boy.*

Part II.

*But to pine and languish,
Or sigh your Anguish
To the Air,
Is fruitless Pain,
Indur'd in vain:
Silent Woes and looks of Care,
Will never, never, win the Fair.*

End with the first Strain.

Wit. Ah! you little Rogue. [To Charlotte.

L. Wr. Infinitely pretty! Nothing sure was ever so musical.

Char. Sing it, sing it, dear Mr. *Witling*; I am on Tiptoe to hear it.

Wit. Well, Madam, if you can bear it in a Falsetto. [He sings.

Char. O Caro! Caro!

Wit. *Anima mia*——

Soph. [To *Gran.*] How happy are the Self-conceited!
and

and yet, if he had not sung now, this Wretch's Folly and Ignorance had been less conspicuous.

Gran. Right, Madam; but you know a Man must have Variety of Parts to make an accomplish'd Coxcomb.

Soph. I scarce think Poetry is more abus'd than musick, by its vain Pretenders.

Gran. And yet it is hard to say, Madam, whether those Pretenders, or the false Taste of our Modern Admirers, have more contributed to the Abuse of either.

Wit. But come, Madam, now your Promise; your Airs only [*To Char.*] can give a *Bonne Bouche* to our Entertainment.

Char. Well; since I gave my Word, I'll use no Ceremony.

Soph. What! more Folly! I grow tired; Shall we walk into my Library? there we may raise our Thoughts.

Gran. You Charm me, Madam? I thirst, methinks, for a clear Draught of *Helicon*.

Soph. Take no leave, but follow me.

(*Ex. Soph. and Gran.*)

Wit. *E ben Sonate.* [*Charlotte dances*] *Eh! Viva! viva!* All Enchantment, Madam; no ten thousand Angels ever came up to it.

L. Wr. It cannot be deny'd but *Charlotte* has an external Genius, she wants no personal Acquisitions; but 'tis great pity the Application they have cost her, was not laid out upon the Improvement of her Understanding.

Wit. O! pardon me, Madam; as long as there is a good Understanding between her and me, what's matter which of us has it, you know.

Sir Gilb. Ay, but there's the Question, which of you 'tis that has it: for if one of you has it, I am sure you two will never come together.

Fran. Well said! at him, Sir.

(*Aside.*)

Wit. Look you, *Sir Gilbert*; you may fancy your fair Daughter and I are a Couple of Fools, if you please; but if one of us had not been wiser than her Father, we could never have had a Right to come together,

gether, in spite of his teeth; that's certain: Hah! hah! hah!

L. Wr. Pardon me, Mr. *Witling*; you under-rate your Merit: for you had been sure of my Consent, without your Contract.

Wit. Ay, Madam, that was only a foolish Modesty, that I could not shake off; therefore I hope you will excuse me, if I durst not think Merit alone was a sufficient Bait to bob Sir *Gilbert* out of his Consent! Hah! hah!

Sir *Gilb.* You are a very merry Grig, Sir; but have a care you are not bobb'd yourself: Stay till you win, before you laugh; for you are not yet married, I presume.

Wit. Why no, nor you have not supp'd yet; yet I hold Gold to Silver, we both eat before we sleep.

Sir *Gilb.* Why! do'st thou think the Girl is in haste to marry thee to-night?

Wit. I don't say that neither: But, Sir, as long as I have a sufficient Deposit of the Lady's Inclinations, to answer for the rest of her Premises, you will give me leave not to be afraid of her looking out for a new Chap in the mean time, Sir.

Sir *Gilb.* A Deposit! why wouldst thou persuade me the Girl can be Fool enough to like thee?

Wit. I-gad, I don't know how 'tis, but she has Wit enough, it seems, to make me think so—but if you won't take my Word, let her answer for herself.

Sir *Gilb.* Ay, that I should be glad to hear.

Wit. Hah! hah! I-gad this is a pleasant Question indeed—Madam, are not you willing, (as soon as the Church-Books can be open) to make a transfer of your whole Stock of Beauty, for the conjugal Uses of your humble Servant?

Char. Indeed, Papa, I won't suppose that can be a Question.

Wit. A-Hum! your humble Servant, Sir.

Char. Beside, are not you oblig'd to sign a further Deed of Consent to Mr. *Witling*?

Sir *Gilb.* Yes, Child; but the same Deed reserves to you a right of Refusal, as well as to him.

Char.

Char. That I understand, Sir; and there's one can witness for whom I have reserv'd that Right of Refusal. (Pointing to Fran.)

Wit. Your humble Servant again, Sir; hah! hah! hah!

L. Wr. I am amaz'd, Mr. *Wrangle*, you could think she could be under the least Difficulty in the Choice.

Fran. And yet, Madam, there are very innocent Ladies, that have made a Difficulty of changing their Inclinations in half an hour.

L. Wr. A Woman of strict Virtue, Sir, ought to have no Inclinations at all; or, if any, those only of being obedient to the Will of her Parents.

Wit. O! let him alone, Madam; the more he rails, the more I shall laugh, depend upon't; the Pain of a Rival is the pleasantest Game in the World: his wishing me at the Devil, is just the same thing as if he wish'd me Joy! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Gilb. Well, Sir, all I shall say, is, that if the Girl has common Sense, thy Contract must still be good for nothing.

Wit. Right! and if you had had common Sense, I am sure you would never have made it; not but to do you Justice, Sir *Gilbert*, I must own you have Wit in your way too, though it's of a very odd Turn, I grant you.

Sir Gilb. Sir, I disown my Pretensions to any, if ever you had Sense enough to find it out.

Wit. Sure you forget, my dear Sir *Gil*. Don't you remember once I did find it out? Did not I slyly catch you in St. *What-de-cillum's* Churchyard, with your Table-book, taking dead People's Names from the Tombstones, to fill up your List of the third Subscription, that you might be sure of those that would never come to claim it? and then pretend to all your Friends you were full; There, at least, you had more Wit to keep People out, than any Man living had to get in: for I grant you, your List was dead sure! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Gilb. Why, ay, this nonsensical story now passes for Wit, I warrant, among your Cocard and Velvet Sparks at *Garraway's*; but much good may do you with your Jest, as long as we have your Money among us:

us : I believe it will be no hard matter to bite most of your soft Heads off before it be long ; and if you drive on as you seem to do, we shall make bold to set some of you down where we took you up, odheartlikins !

Wit. Nay, I grant you, to do your own Business, you must do other People's too ; but if all the young Fellows of Dress and Pleasure would follow me, I would undertake to lead you a Dance for all that.

Sir Gilb. And, pray, what would you have them do ?

Wit. Why ? do ! as you do ; nothing that you pretend to do : or do, as I did, every thing that you whisper'd me not to do. I minded what your Broker *did*, not what you *said*, my Dear ? And if every Gentleman would but buy, when you advise him to sell ; or sell when you advise him to buy, 'twould be impossible to go out of the way : Why ! 'tis as plain a Road, Man, as from *Hide Park Corner* to *Kensington*.

Sir Gilb. Sir, you take a great deal of Liberty with my Character ; insomuch, that I must tell you, I am not sure I won't pay the Forfeit of my Contract, rather than part with my Daughter to a Coxcomb——and so take it as you will.

L. Wr. *Mr. Wrangle* ! What do you mean by this Brutality ?

Fran. *Mr. Witling*, Madam, will take nothing ill, that I think fit to justify, I am sure.

Wit. No, faith ! you need not fear it ; 'Ill marry before I fight, depend upon't. Ha ! ha !

L. Wr. *Mr. Witling*, I beg you come away this moment——I'll undertake to do your Merit Justice : I'll see who dares pretend to govern in this Family beside myself. *Charlotte*, give me your Hand——Come, Sir——

(Exit L. Wr.)

Wit. I am all Obedience, Madam——your humble Servant, *Mr. Frankley*——*Would you woo her*——

(Exit singing, with Charlotte.)

Fran. Admirably well done, Sir ! you have work'd his Insolence to rare Order. Now, if you can but stand it out as stoutly with my Lady, our Business is done.

Sir Gilb

Sir Gilb. If!—Will you stand by me?

Fran. Will you give me your Authority, Sir, to handle her roundly, and make her know who ought to be her Master?

Sir Gilb. My Authority! ay, and Thanks into the Bargain——come along, I'll send for the Lawyer now——*Mr. Frankley*, my Blood rises at her, she shall find I'll vindicate the Honour of the City, and, from this moment, demolish her Petticoat-Government.

Fran. Well said; I'll warrant you, Sir.

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T V.

Sir Gilbert and Frankley.

Sir GILBERT.

MY dear *Frankley*, I could not rest till I had thee alone again; thou hast gain'd upon me for ever: your vindicating the Husband's Authority, and taking my Wife a Peg lower before my Face, has tickled my Fancy to that degree, that, odzooks! I could wish in my Heart thou hadst been married to her.

Fran. O! I should be loth to have robbed you, Sir, of that Happiness.

Sir Gilb. A-hum! you are right, you are right; I did not think of that indeed: Well! 'tis a very odd thing now, that a Wife will sooner be kept under by any Man than her Husband: Why the Duce can't I govern her so?

Fran. There's no great Secret in the matter, Sir; for take any Couple in *Christendom*, you will certainly find, that the more troublesome of the two is always Head of the Family.

Sir Gilb. By my troth, I believe you are right; and since the War is begun, I'll make a fair push for't. I am resolv'd now to thwart her in every thing; and if *Granger* has but Wit enough to talk *Sophronia* into her Senses; that is, if he can but convince her that she

is

The Ladies Philosophy.

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is Flesh and Blood, and born to breed, like other Women : Odzooks ! he shall marry her immediately : I'll plague her Ladyship that way too.

Fran. That way ! O ! ay, it's true ; for I think I have heard you say, Sir, that if either of your Daughters die unmarried, my Lady is to inherit their Fortunes.

Sir Gilb. Ay, ay ; there the Shoe pinches, Man ; she would be as much an Enemy to *Granger*, as she is to you, if she could in the least suspect he would ever make any thing of it with *Sophronia*.

Fran. And, if I don't mistake, Sir, *Granger* is in a fair Way there too ; for, to my Knowledge, he has been lock'd up with her this half Hour, here in her Library.

Sir Gilb. The Dickens !

Fran. Did not you observe them steal off together just after the Musick ?

Sir Gilb. I wonder'd, indeed, what was become of them ; by the Lord *Harry* I am glad of it—I must have a Peep at them [*goes to the Key-hole.*] Odso ! they are just a coming forth.

Fran. We had best be out of the way then, that we may not disturb them.

Sir Gilb. No, no ; I'll warrant you : Prithee let us stand behind this Skreen, and observe what passes.

Fran. Quick ! quickly then ; here they come.

[*They retire.*]

Enter Granger with Sophronia.

Soph. O *Granger* ! still preserve this Purity,
And my whole Soul will open to receive thee :
Forget, like me, thy Sex, how sweetly may
We pass our Days with rational Desire !

Thou seest I own, without a Blush, my Love,
For Blushes only rise from guilty Flames ;
When Conscience driven, reluctant to the Crime,
Leaps to the Face, and marks the Cheek with Shame :
But the chaste Heart, sublim'd by purer Fires,
Knowing no conscious Fear, Reserve, or Guile,
Gives, with unbounded Frankness, all its Store,
And only blushes—that it gives no more.

Gran. Hear this, ye bright immortal Choirs above,
And own that human Souls, like you, can love.

D

Sir

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Sir Gilb. Heyday! this is downright Love in a Tragedy! Well! he's a comical Thief.

Fran. Hush! let him go on, Sir.

Soph. Can you forgive the tedious Banishment,
Which my Distrust and Dread impos'd on you?

Gran. Can I reproach you for so just, so kind
A Fear? While thro' the general Race of Man,
A sensual and infectious Passion rages,
Giving, from Sex to Sex, the mortal Tainture.
Can I complain, if, to preserve yourself
From the Contagion, you've perhaps enjoin'd
The Healthy to perform his Quarantine?
But landing thus, upon my native Soil,
I leave my Sufferings past behind, and think
The Present now is all that's left of Time,
Or worth my Care.

Soph. Blush! blush! ye base degenerate World,
That boast the Bliss of gross connubial Love;
Can you wear human Forms, yet see the prone,
The Brute Creation; equal your Desires?
Had you or Souls or Sense refin'd, you'd form
Your Wishes worthy your superior Being;
Curb, with imperial Reason, lawless Nature,
And reach, like us, the Joys of Love seraphick.

Gran. O Harmony of Hearts! O spotless Passion!
Here, on this Hand, the Altar of my Vows,
I offer up my purer Part, my Soul
To thine, and swear inviolable——

Soph. ————— Hold!
Passions, like ours, no formal Vows require;
For Vows suppose Distrust, or faithless Love,
The frail Security of sensual Flames;
But where the Pure, with the pure Soul unites,
The simple Hand thus given, and receiv'd, suffices.

Gran. Let then this Hand my spotless Heart resign.

Soph. Thus in exchange I blend my Soul with thine.

Sir Gilb. So! they are got to Hand and Heart already;
but now, now for a Touch at the rest of her Premisses.

Fran. Nay, dear Sir, be easy.

Sir Gilb. Well! well! I will.

Soph. And now, no more *Sophronia*, but thy Friend;
Be both my Name and Sex from hence forgotten.

Gran.

Gran. No :

Let me remember still that thou art fair ;
For were there no Temptation in thy Beauty,
Where were the Merit of such hard Resistance ?
Indeed, my Friend, 'tis hard ! 'tis hard Resistance !
The Organs of my Sight, my Ear, my Feeling,
As I am made of human Mold, in spite
Of me, exert their Functions, and are pleas'd ;
I view thee with Delight, I hear with Transport,
And thy Touch——is Rapture——

Soph. How fares my Friend ?

Gran. Like the poor Wretch that parches in a Fever,
With fatal Thirst, yet begs for present Ease,
To drink, and die——

Soph. From whence this new Disorder ?

Gran. Tell me, *Sophronia*, is my Virtue blameful,
Because my Senses act as Nature bids them ?
Am I in Fault if the sharp Winter's Frost
Can chill my Limbs, or Summer's Sun will scorch them ?
What Matter can resist the Elements ?
Rivers will freeze, and solid Mountains burn ;
What Bodies will not change ?——Thus the tall Oak——

‘ Tho’ from our meaner Flames secure,
‘ Must that which falls from Heaven endure.

Soph. Where has he learn'd this Art of unoffending
Flattery ? *[Aside.]*

Gran. Canst thou reproach me then, if while thy
Beauties,

With such a Blaze of Charms invade my Sense,
My human Heart's not Proof against their Power ?

Soph. Reproach thee ! no ; Bodies are but the Shells,
Or Huts, that cover in the Soul, and are,
Like other Fabricks, subject to Mischance :
The Cells of Hermits may be fir'd ; but none
Reproach the Wretch, that suffers by the Flame.

Gran. O *Sophronia* ! canst thou forgive me then,
That my material Dross thus burns before thee ?
That my whole Frame thus kindles at thy Beauty,
And even warms my Soul with fond Desire ?
Like an impatient Child it languishes,
And pines for Wants unknown, it sighs, it pants,
To be indulg'd upon thy friendly Bosom,

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To fold thee in my tender Arms, to talk,
And gaze, with mutual soft Benevolence
Of Eyes, as Giving were our only Pleasure.

Sir Gilb. Adod! I believe he's in earnest, he makes
me half in love to hear him.

Soph. Is it possible? Can then
Such Softness mingle with corporeal Passion? [*Apart.*

Gran. But while the Soul alone is suffer'd to
Possess, and bars my mortal Part from Joy;
My poor repining Senses murmur at
Their Fate, and call thy Purity unjust,
To starve the Body, while the Mind knows Plenty;
Yet, like a Churl, engrosses whole the Feast.
My Senses claim a Share from Nature's Law;
They think, with a more melting Softness, they
Could love, and even inform the Soul with Rapture.

Sir Gilb. Ay; now! we begin to work her.

Gran. Consider them, as Part of me, thy Friend,
Thy Friend may sure be trusted with your Pity!
O! relieve them! give me some Sign at least,
One kind Embrace, or a chaste Sister's Kifs,
In certain Proof that thou art still my Friend,
That yet thou hat'st me not—I ask no more.

Soph. *Pignora certa petis? do Pignora certa—Timendo.*

Gran. Does then thy Fear alone refuse me? O *Sophronia!*
Why, why must Virtue be this Foe to Nature?
Why set our Senses with our Souls at Variance,
As Heaven had form'd thee fair—to kill thy Friend.

Soph. What means my throbbing Heart? O Virtue!
Now save me from unequal Nature's Power! (now!
Now guard me from myself—and hide my Shame!

Gran. Must I then perish? Will my Friend forsake me?

Soph. O *Granger!* I am lost—thou hast undone me!
I am fallen, and thou wilt hate me now.

Gran. O *Sophronia!*

Soph. ————Lend me thy Arm, support me!
Thy melting Complaints have stole upon my Heart,
And soften'd me to Wishes never known before.

Gran. O the tumultuous Joy! [*She sinks into his Arms.*

Sir Gilb. Ah! dead! dead! we have her, Boy! we
have her.

Fren. See how she pants!

Now,

How, like a wounded Dove, she beats her Wings,
And trembling hovers to her Mate for Succour.
O the dear Confusion! Awake, *Sophronia*!
Now wake to new and unconceiv'd Delights,
Which faint Philosophy could never reach,
Which Nature gave thee Charms to taste, and give.

Soph. O! I could wish, methinks, for ev'ry Power,
That might have Charms, for thee: Thy Words,
Like *Hybla* Drops, distil upon my Sense,
And I could hear thee talk for ever.

Gran. O be but thus for ever kind, thy Eyes
Will find new Subjects for eternal Talk,
And everlasting Love: Blush not, my Fair,
That thou art kind; thy Heart has only paid
To Love, the Tribute due from Nature's whole Creation;
For Wisdom to his Power oppos'd, is Folly:
Hear how the *British Virgil* sings his Sway;

- Thus every Creature, and of every Kind,
- The secret Joys of mutual Passion find;
- Not only Man's imperial Race, but they
- That wing the liquid Air, or swim the Sea,
- Or haunt the Desert, rush into the Flame;
- For Love is Lord of All, and is in all the same.

[Exit *Gran.* and *Soph.*

Sir Gilb. O rare Philosophy! O fine Philosophy! dainty Philosophy! ho!

[Singing.

Fran. Ha! ha! ha! that must be a pleasant sort of Philosophy indeed, Sir, that pretends to be wiser than Nature. *Platonick* Love is a mere Philosopher's-stone; when different Sexes once come to lay their Heads together about it, the Projection's sure to fly in *Fumo*.

Sir Gilb. *Fumo*! ay, I warrant you. A handsome Wench, that shuts herself up two or three Hours with a young Fellow, only out of Friendship, is making a hopeful Experiment in Natural Philosophy indeed—Why it's just like spreading a Bag of Gunpowder before a great Fire, only to dry it; ha! ha! ha!

Fran. Right, Sir—it puts me in mind of the *Irish* Soldier, who, to steal Powder out of a full Barrel, cunningly bored a Hole in it with a red hot Poker.

Sir Gilb. Ah! very good! ha! ha! ha! As you say, it's hard

hard Luck indeed, that her first Touch of his Hand should blow up all the rest of her Body.

Fran. But to do her Justice, Sir, she was not won without a good deal of Art neither : A plain Battery of Love would have done nothing upon her ; you see, he was forced to sap her with his Self-reproaches, and put it all upon the Point of her Compassion to his Senses.

Sir Gilb. Nay, the Toad did worm her nicely, that I must needs say !

Fran. Ha ! ha ! ha ! what a rare Welcome too this News will have with my Lady ; how she will fume at the Disappointment ?

Sir Gilb. Nay, I have nothing to do with that, you know ; this was none of my doing ; Let every Tub stand upon its own Bottom ; I shall e'en leave her Ladyship to his Management : All I can promise him, is, not to hinder the Matter.

Fran. That's all he will desire, I dare say, Sir : Be you but as passive in his Affair as mine, I'll warrant we will find Courage enough between us to maintain our Pretensions.

Sir Gilb. Ay ! there you are right again ; stick to your Stuff, Boys ; and if I don't stand by you, may I be a Cock of the hen-peck'd Corporation as long as I live.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's Mr. Delay the Lawyer.

Sir Gilb. Odso ! that's well ! Now Mr. Frankley—

Fran. I believe, Sir, you had best keep him out of my Lady's sight, till Matters are ripe for Execution.

Sir Gilb. You are right, you are right—say no more, I'll do it. *[Exit Sir Gilb.]*

Fran. So ! thus far we stand fair ; we have nothing now to combat but my Lady ; and *Cranger's* Success with *Sophronia*, at this time, will naturally strengthen our Alliance against her : As for my Friend *Witling*, his own Assurance and Vanity will partly do his Business—But however, in the mean while, it will not be amiss to keep him warm and ripe for our Design—*A propos !* here he comes.

Enter Witling.

Wit. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Dear *Tom* ! I am glad I have found thee, Faith ! I have a Favour to beg of thee.

Fran.

Fran. Why then, I am glad you have found me too—because, I believe I shall not grant it.

Wit. Ha! ha! what crabb'd still, my Dear! but I come to thee from a fair Lady, Child; and 'tis for her sake I am going to be obliged to thee.

Fran. I am glad of that too: A Woman of Sense I warrant her, by her sending thee on a Fool's Errand.

Wit. Ay, but my Dear! the Errand happens to be her's now; and so thou hast civilly put the Fool upon the Woman of Sense: Good again! one of thy old Blunders, *Tom*! for, I think thou hast but cursed Luck in making thy Way to the Women.

Fran. When you tell me the Lady you come from, I shall be better able to guess, whether she takes me or you for a Fool.

Wit. Suppose then it were from a Lady, *Tom*, that designs to take either you or me for a Husband? What dost thou think of my little *Charlotte*, my dear *Tommy*?

Fran. Why, if she takes thee for a Husband, I shall think her a Fool; and if I should take thee for a Wit, she would think me a Fool: But by her sending thee to ask a Favour of me, it's a Sign she thinks thee a Fool.

Wit. Ha! ha! a very pretty Parcel of cross Purposes, a Fool and Wit, and Wit and Fool; and she and thee, and me! What? art thou playing at Huffle-cap with thy Words, Child? Thou dost not expect I should take all thy Jingle-jumble for Wit, dost thou?

Fran. No, Faith! if it be Wit, I expect thou shouldst not take it.

Wit. With all my Heart: Come, come, it shall be Wit then; I will mistake it for once—But to Business—this fair Lady, my dear *Tom*—

Fran. Ay, what of her?

Wit. Why, poor Soul, she desir'd me to come to you, and—

Fran. And leave her to better Company, ha!

Wit. Look you, *Tom*, I know Losers ought to have Leave to speak, and therefore at present you shall have all the Wit to yourself, my Dear; but don't be uneasy at my Happiness, dear *Tom*; for to tell you the Truth, the Creature

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ture is so cursed fond of me, that she begins to grow troublesome already. Ha! ha! ha!

Fran. Why don't you make yourself easy then, and give her up to me?

Wit. No, no; I must not break the poor Fool's Heart neither; for you must know, she is in a terrible Taking about me.

Fran. How so, Sir?

Wit. Why she said, just now, she was afraid to marry me so soon as To-night, upon thy Account.

Fran. Good! then there may be Hopes she will not marry thee on any Account.

Wit. No, don't flatter thyself neither, my dear *Tommy*; for her Concern at the Bottom was all upon my Account.

Fran. How does that appear?

Wit. Why you know, says she, after all, poor *Frankley* has some sort of Pretensions to me: I don't know how it was, says she, but some Way or other he got in with my Father; so I durst not wholly discourage his Addressee. Now *Frankley's* of a surly Temper, says she; and if I should marry you in the Heat of his Disappointment, he may say or do some rash Thing upon't: And I know, says she, Mr. *Witling*, you are violent in your Nature too; and if Matters should rise to a Quarrel, no body knows where the Mischief may end; the World would certainly lay it all my Door—I should be the miserablest Creature alive—therefore I beg you, says she, go to him from me, and try to make an amicable End of the Business; and the Moment poor *Frankley's* made easy, says she, I'll marry you, the next Hour, without any Reserve in the whole World.

Fran. Why then, without any Reserve in the whole World, pray tell the Lady, that she may depend upon it I am certainly easy—because I am sure she imposes upon you.

Wit. Impose upon me, Child! ha! ha! that's pleasant enough, ha! ha!

Fran. That is, she lets you impose upon yourself, which is the same Thing.

Wit. That may be, *Tom*; but the Devil take me if I can find it out: But however, I am mighty glad you do,

do, because then I am sure, as long as you are easy, you can't take it ill, if I shou'd burst my Ribs with laughing at your Fancy.

Fran. O! not in the least! and to increase your Mirth, Sir, I will be farther bold to tell you, she has as hearty a Contempt for you, if possible, as I have.

Wit. Good again! Ha! ha! ha!

Fran. Thou art a Thing so below all human Consideration, thou hast not wherewithal to give a Spaniard Jealousy.

Wit. Ah! poor *Tom*, if thou didst but know all now! Ha! ha!

Fran. But to think thyself agreeable to her, thou must have the Impudence of a *French Harlequin*.

Wit. Ah! dear *Tom*, thou charm'st me! for since I find thou art not, in the least, uneasy at her Engagement with me, to tell thee the Truth, I have nothing else at present that can possibly retard my Happiness.

Fran. Why then, Sir, be as happy as you deserve; and pray let the Lady know, as to any Favour she designs you, I am in perfect Peace of Mind and Tranquility.

Wit. And you really give me leave to tell her so?

Fran. Tell her, I am more easy than she herself will be, when she has married you.

Wit. Why then, perish me, if thou art not one of the best bred Rivals in the whole World! ha! ha! And here she comes, Faith, to thank thee for her part of the Consolation. Ha! ha!

Fran. Ha! ha!

Enter Charlotte.

Char. So, Gentlemen, I am glad to find you in such good Humour.

Wit. O! Madam, the dearest Friends in the World: I have obey'd your Commands, and here's honest *Tom* is so far from being uneasy at our Marriage, that I-gad I can't get him to believe it will ever come to any thing.

Char. O! as to that, Mr. *Frankley* may think as he pleases; but if he is not uneasy upon your account, that is all I pretend to desire of him.

Wit. No, no, honest *Tom* will give us no Trouble, depend upon't.

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Fran. Not I, upon my Honour, Madam ; for though I might be provok'd to cut any other Man's Throat, that should pretend to you, yet the Value I have for Mr. *Witling*, secures him from my least Resentment.

Wit. Look you there, Madam ! You see your Fears are all over ; I don't find we have any think to do now, but to send for the Parson.

Char. Ay, but I don't well understand him ; for he seems to be neither jealous of your Merit, nor my Inclination : and that I can scarce think possible.

Fran. You may upon my Soul, Madam : for I have so just a Sense of both, that if it had not been in regard to your Father's Contract, I am convinced you would never have endured the sight of him.

Wit. Ah ! poor Tom ! he has much ado to smother it.

(Apart.)

Char. Very pretty ! so you think that my admitting his Addressee is mere Grimace, and that I am all this while taking pains only to deceive Mr. *Witling*.

Fran. Alas ! you need not do that, Madam ; he takes so much to deceive himself, he really gives you no trouble about it.

Wit. You see, Child, we may put any thing upon him.

Char. Right ! you take it as I could wish ! Let me alone with him. And so, Sir, you really expect I should be pleas'd with your having this free Opinion of my Conduct ?

Fran. I must be pleas'd with every thing you undertake in my Favour, Madam.

Wit. How vain the Rogue is too ? *(Aside.)*

Char. I am amaz'd ! But how naturally a Coxcomb shews himself. *(Aside.)*

Wit. Ay, that's when he is in your hands, Madam ! Ha ! hah ! I-gad she plays him nicely off. *(Aside.)*

Char. After this, one should wonder at nothing ! Nay, there are some Fools, I see, whose Vanity is so far from being offensive, that they become diverting even to a Rival.

Fran. Mr. *Witling* is always entertaining, Madam.

Wit. Hah ! Prodigious ! I-gad he thinks you mean me all this while. Ha ! ha ! ha ! *(Aside.)*

Char.

Char. Well, sure there never was so bright a Coxcomb

Wit. I-gad I'll humour him : Ha ! ha ! [*Apart*]

Char. By all means, you will make him shine to a Miracle. [*Apart*]

Wit. Why then perish me, *Tom*, if ever I was so well diverted at a *French Comedy*. [*Shakes his Hand.*

Fran. That may very well be, Sir : for Fools are apt to be fond of their own Parts. [*Shakes Witling's Hand.*

Char. Ha ! ha !

Wit. Ay ! so they are, the Devil take me ; for, I see, there's no beating thee out of thine.

Fran. How should I be out, when you play all the Scene yourself.

Wit. No, no, *Tom*, I only laugh all : but 'tis your Part that makes me, Child.

Fran. Right ! if you did not laugh, where the Devil should the Jest be ?

Wit. Why then, you see, I do the Fool Justice. *Tom.* Ha ! ha !

Fran. Ay, the Devil take me, dost thou ; I never saw him better acted.

Wit. Ah ! but you don't know, my Dear, that to make a Coxcomb shine, requires a little more Wit than thou art aware of.

Fran. I know that he, who has least Wit of us two, has enough to do that, my Dear.

Wit. Ay ! that is when a Coxcomb shews himself, *Tom.*

Fran. Nay, in that I grant no Mortal can come up to thee.

Wit. Hah ! hah ! hah ! O ! dear Rogue, I must kiss thee.

Omnes. Hah ! hah ! hah !

Enter Lady Wrangle and Charlotte.

L. Wr. Your Servant, your Servant, good People : Whence all this mighty Mirth, pray ?

Wit. O ! Madam, here has been such a Scene ! such Hit and Dash upon one another ; in short, such Brightness o'both sides, the Full Moon, in a Frosty Night, never came up to it.

Char.

Char. I must needs say, I never saw Mr. *Witling* shine so before.

Fran. No, Madam! why he always talks like a Lunatick, as you now may judge by his *Similies*.

Wit. Ah! poor *Tom*! thy Wit indeed is, like the light of the Moon, none of thy own: If I don't mistake, my Dear, I was forced to shine upon thee, before thou wert able to make one Reflection.

Fran. There you are once in the right, for I certainly could not have laugh'd, if you had not given me a hearty Occasion.

Wit. Ay, but the Cream of the Jest is, *Tom*, that at the same time I really gave thee no occasion at all.

Fran. Right again, my Dear; for your not knowing that, is the only Jest that's worth laughing at.

Both. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Wr. This must be some extraordinary Mistake indeed; for I have no Notion that Mr. *Frankley* and you can have reason to laugh upon the same Occasion.

Wit. Why, Faith! the Occasion is a little extraordinary: for you must know, Madam, that honest *Tom* and I here, are both going to be married to this Lady.

L. Wr. Both!

Wit. Ay both, Madam; for, it seems, she has not been able to convince us that either of us must go without her.

L. Wr. That's so like Mr. *Frankley's* Vanity, that can't think his Mistress lost, tho' he sees her just falling into the Arms of his Rival.

Fran. My Vanity and yours, Madam, are much upon a foot; tho' I think you happen'd to be first cured of it.

L. Wr. What do you mean, Sir?

Fran. That by this time you are convinced I was never in love with your Ladyship.

L. Wr. I am convinced, that a very little trouble would have made you so.

Fran. It must have been a good deal more than it cost me, to make you believe so.

L. Wr. If you have still Hopes of marrying *Charlotte*, Sir, I don't wonder at your believing any thing. Ha! ha! ha!

Fran. Laugh when you see me despair, Madam.

L. Wr.

L. Wr. I need not stay for that, your Hope is ridiculous enough; and I laugh, because you can't see.

Fran. Yes, yes, I can see, Madam; I have seen all this day what 't's you drive at: In short, Madam, you have no mind that either of Sir *Gilbert's* Daughters should marry; because if they die Maids, you have secured the Chance of succeeding to their Fortunes.

L. Wr. Ay, do make the World believe that, if you can: Persuade Mr. *Witling* that I have no mind *Charlotte* should marry him.

Fran. What Mr. *Witling* thinks, is out of the question, Madam: but you are sure that she never designs to marry him: so that your setting up his Pretensions is not with the least View of doing him good, but of doing me harm; or rather, that while you manage the Dispute well on both sides, neither of us may have her.

L. Wr. He has guess'd the Secret; but that shall not hinder my Proceeding. You are in the right to hope as long as you can, Sir; but I presume you don't do it from my Friendship, nor Mr. *Wrangle's* Content, or *Charlotte's* Inclination.

Fran. Be it what it will, Madam, it has a better Foundation, than your Hope of succeeding either to her's or *Sophronia's* Fortune: For shall I tell you another Secret, Madam? *Sophronia* is going to be married to *Granger*; so that you are equally like to be disappointed there too.

L. Wr. *Sophronia* married!

Fran. Ay, ay, married, married, Married, bedded bedded, made a mere Wife of; 'tis not half an hour ago since I saw her sink, and melt into his Bosom, with all the yielding Fondness of a Milk-maid.

L. Wr. *Sophronia* do this?

Fran. *Sophronia*, Madam; nay, Sir *Gilbert* was, at the same time, a secret Witness of all; and was glad, glad of it, Madam: and, to my certain Knowledge, resolves that *Granger* shall marry her instantly: And so, Madam, all that fantastick Fort-Philosophy, that you have been building in her Brains for seven Years together, is (with one honest Attack of mere Flesh and Blood) fairly demolish'd, and brought to nothing.

L. Wr. I'll not believe it, I know your Ears deceiv'd you;

you; he might, perhaps, transport her, but never to a sensual Thought.

Fran. Oons! Madam, I tell you, I heard, and saw it all myself; saw her sighing, blushing, panting in his Arms, with mortal, sensual, amorous desire: All her romantick Pride reduc'd, and humbled to the Obedience of that universal Monarch of Mankind, Love, Madam; plain, naked, natural Love, Love, Madam.

L. Wr. I am confounded! if this be true, his Triumph is insupportable. (*Aside.*) Ha! what do I see!

Enter Granger, leading Sophronia.

Fran. Dear Granger, I congratulate thy Happiness!

Gran. My Happiness indeed! for, till I was victorious, I knew not half the value of my Conquest.

Fran. (*To Soph.*) Give me then leave to hope, Madam, that our former Difference is forgot; since the more elevated Passion of my Friend has now convinc'd me of my own Unworthiness.

Soph. I cannot disavow my tenderest Sense of Granger's Merit, give it what Name you please: I own 'tis something—*Quod nequeo dicere, & sentio tantum*: But am still proud that Love alone, unassisted by Philosophy, could never have subdued me.

L. Wr. Is it possible!

By your leave, Madam.

She breaks thro' the Company, and takes Soph. apart.

Fran. Heyday! what's to do now?

Gran. O Frankley! I have such a melting Scene to tell thee!

Fran. You may spare yourself the Trouble; Sir Gilbert and I overheard every word of it—*Aside.* But I allow you an Artist.

Gran. Was it not very whimsical?

Fran. Hush!

L. Wr. (*To Soph.*) Look in my Face—fall upon me.

Soph. Why that severe Look, Madam?

L. Wr. To make you blush at your Apostacy.

Soph. Converts to Truth are no Apostates, Madam.

L. Wr. Is this your self-denial? This your Distaste of odious Man?

Soph. Madam, I have consider'd well my Female State,

State, and am now a Profelyte to that Philosophy which says, *Nature makes nought in vain.*

L. Wr. What's then become of your *Platonick System*?

Soph. Dissolved, evaporated, impracticable, and fallacious all: You'll own I have labour'd in the Experiment, but found at last, that to try Gold in a Crucible of Virgin-Wax, was a mere Female Folly.

L. Wr. But how durst you, Madam, entertain a Thought of Marriage without acquainting me?

Soph. Madam, I am now under this Gentleman's Protection; and from henceforth, think my Actions only cognizable to him.

L. Wr. Very fine!

Fran. Ay, ay, Madam, 'tis but holding your Spleen to no purpose; you have no Right to dispose of either of those Ladies; Sir *Gilbert's* Consent is what we depend upon; and as far as that can go, we shall make bold to insist upon them both, Madam; and so you may as well put your Passion in your Pocket, Madam.

L. Wr. Insupportable! [Walks in Anger.

Wit. Ha! ha! well said, *Tommy*! What, art thou crack-brain'd still, my Dear? How the Devil didst thou come by Sir *Gil.*'s Consent? What! he has not mortgag'd it twice over, has he? but if he has, with all my Heart. I fancy we shall find a way to make his first Deed stand good however; and that, I am sure, I have here safe in my Pocket, Child.

Fran. O that shall be tried presently, Sir; and here he comes with the Lawyer for the purpose.

Enter Sir Gilbert, with a Lawyer.

L. Wr. Mr. *Wrangle*, what do you mean by this Usage? How dare you affront me thus?

Sir Gilb. I affront you! my Lady.

L. Wr. Ay, Sir, by bringing these Roysters here, to insult me in my own Family.

Sir Gilb. *Frankley*—stand by me.

Gran. Roysters! Madam.

L. Wr. Sir, I am not speaking to you—I say, Mr. *Wrangle*, how dare you do this?

Sir Gilb. Do, Madam! I don't do any thing, not I; if the Gentlemen have done any harm, yon had best talk

to them; I believe they have both Tongues in their Heads, and will be able to answer you.

Fran. Ay, ay, Madam, if you have received any Injury from either of us, we are the proper Persons to talk with you.

L. Wr. What! will you stand by, and tamely see me abus'd in my own House?

Sir Gilb. Odzines, Madam, don't abuse yourself; the Gentlemen are civil Gentlemen, and Men of Honour; but if you don't know how to behave yourself to them, that's none of their Fault.

L. Wr. Prodigious! behave myself! do you presume to teach me, you rude illiterate Monster?

Sir Gilb. Hold her fast, pray, Gentlemen.

Gran. (Interposing) Come, come, be compos'd, Madam, consider how these violent Emotions dishonour your Philosophy.

Sir Gilb. Ay, Madam, if you are a Philosopher, now let's see a Sample of it.

L. Wr. Yes, Sir, I'll give you one Instance of it immediately; before you stir out of this Room, I'll make you do justice to this Gentleman, I'll make you keep your Contract, Sir.

Sir Gilb. Why, Madam, you need not be in a Passion about that; I don't design any other, I'll do him justice immediately.

L. Wr. O! will you so!—come then, where's the Deed, Sir?

Wit. A-hum? your humble Servant! how dost thou do now, my little Tommy?

Fran. I'll tell you presently, Sir.

Wit. Ha! ha! I gad thou art resolv'd to die hard, I find.

Lawy. Here, Madam, this is the Deed; there is nothing wanting but the Blanks to be filled up with the Bridegroom's Name: Pray which is the Gentleman?

L. Wr. Here, Sir, this is he——put in *William Wisting, Esq;*

Sir Gilb. Hold, Madam, two Words to that Bargain, that is not the Gentleman I have resolv'd upon.

L. Wr.

L. Wr. Come, come, Mr. *Wrangle*, don't be a Fool, I say.

Sir Gilb. And pray, Madam, don't you pretend to be wiser than I am.

L. Wr. What stupid Fetch have you got in your Head now?

Wit. Heyday! what time of the Moon is this? Why have not I your Contract here in my Hand, Sir *Gilbert*?

Sir Gilb. With all my Heart, make your best on't; I'll pay the Penalty, and what have you to say now? And so, Sir, [*To the Lawyer*] I say put me in *Thomas Frankley Esq*;

L. Wr. Mr. *Wrangle*! don't provoke me! do you know that the Penalty of your refusing Mr. *Witling*, is above six and twenty thousand Pounds Difference, Sir?

Sir Gilb. Yes, Madam; but to let you see that I am not the Fool you take me for, neither; there's that will secure me against paying a Farthing of it.

(*Sir Gilb. shews a Bond.*)

L. Wr. What do you mean?

Sir Gilb. Why that this, Madam, is a Joint-Bond from Mr. *Granger* and *Frankley*, to indemnify me from all Demands, Costs, and Consequences of Mr. *Witling's* Contract.

(*L. Wrang. peruses the Bond.*)

Char. Now, Mr. *Witling*, you see upon what a shallow Foundation *Frankley* built all his Vanity and Assurance——But, poor Man! he did not consider it was still in my power to marry you, tho' you had no Contract at all with my Father.

Wit. Right, my pretty Soul! I suppose he thought the merit, and frank Air of his Blood, forsooth, would have made you cock sure to him; but I'll let him see presently, that I know how to pay a handsome Compliment to a fair Lady, as well as himself: I gad, I will bite his Head off.

Char. Ay, do, Mr. *Witling*, you touch my Heart with the very Thought of it.

Wit. Ah! you charming Devil!

L. Wr. (*To Sir Gilbert.*) Is this then your Expedient? Is this your sordid way of evading all Right and Justice? Go! you vile Scandal to the Board you

92 *The REFUSAL; or,*

fit at; but you shall find that I have a superior Sense of Honour. And thus! thus! thus! I'll force you to be just.

(Tears the Bond.)

Fran. Confusion!

Sir Gilb. Oons! Madam! what do you mean by this Outrage?

L. Wr. Now where's your Security? Where is your vile Evasion now, Sir? what Trick? what Shift have you now to save you?

Sir Gilb. Frankly,——stand by me.

Fran. Was ever such a Devil?

Gran. Fear nothing——I'll warrant you——come, Sir, don't be dishearten'd, your Security shall be renew'd to your Content; Let the Lawyer draw it up this Instant, and I give my word of Honour to sign it over again before all this Company.

Sir Gilb. Say'st thou so, my Lad, why then, odshartlikins——*Frankly*, stand by me.

Fran. Generous Granger!

L. Wr. Let the Lawyer draw up any such thing in my House if he dares.

Gran. Nay, then, Madam, I'll see who dares molest him.

Fran. I-gad, whoever does, shall have more than one to deal with.

Sir Gilb. Well said, stand your Ground——write away, Man.

[To the Lawyer.]

Char. Now, Mr. *Witling*.

Wit. Nay, nay, if that's your Play, Gentlemen——come, come, I'll shew you a shorter way to make an end of this matter——and to let you see you are all in the wrong Box, and that now I am secure of the Lady's Inclination, I think it a Dishonour to her Beauty to make use of any other Advantage, than the naked Merit of her humble Servant. There, *Sir Gilbert*, there's your Contract back again, tear it, cancel it, or light your Pipe with it——And Madam——

[To Charlotte.]

Char. Ay, now, Mr. *Witling*, you have made me the happiest Creature living! And now, Mr. *Lawyer*——

Wit. Ay now, Gentlemen——

Char. Put in *Thomas Frankley, Esq;*

Wit.

Wit. Fire and Brimstone!

Fran. Ay now, Mr. *Witling*——

Sir Gilb. Oddheart! in with him——

L. Wr. Come, come, Mr. *Wrangle*——

Sir Gilb. Ooons! Wife, be quiet——

L. Wr. Wife! What am I abus'd! insulted then!

Sir Gilb. Ah *Charlotte*! let me hug thee! and buss thee! and bless thee to Death! But here, Hussy! here's a pair of Lips that will make better Work with thee!

Wit. Bit by the Powers!

Char. Nay, don't say that of me, Mr. *Witling*; 'twas even all your own doing: for you can't reproach me with having once told you I ever loved, or liked you: How then could you think of marrying me?

Wit. Not reproach you, Madam? Oons and Death! Did you not as good as——

Fran. Hold, Sir, when you speak to my Wife, I must beg you to soften the Tone of your Voice a little.

Wit. Heyday! what a Pox must not Losers have leave to speak neither?

Fran. No, no, my dear *Billy*, thou art no Loser at all; for you have made your Call, you see——and now have fairly had your Refusal too.

Wit. Ha! ha! that's pleasantly said however, I gad! I can't help laughing at a good thing though, tho' I am half ready to hang myself.

Fran. Nay then, *Witling*, henceforth I'll allow thee a Man of Parts, tho' at the same time you must grant me, there are no Fools like your Wits: But since thou hast Wit enough to laugh at thyself, I think no body else ought to do it.

Wit. Why then, dear *Tom*, I give you Joy: for, to say the truth, I believe I was a little over-hasty in this matter: But, as thou say'st, he that has not Wit enough to find himself sometimes a Fool, is in danger of being Fool enough, to have nobody think him a Wit but himself.

Fran. [To *L. Wr.*] And now, Madam, were it but possible to deserve your Pardon.

L. Wr.

L. *Wr.* I see you know my Weakness——Sub-
mission must prevail upon a generous Nature——I
forgive you.

Sir *Gilb.* Why, that's well said of all sides: And now
you are part of my Family, Gentlemen, I'll tell you a
Secret that concerns your Fortune——Hark you——
in one word——sell——sell out as fast as you can:
for (among Friends) the Game's up——ask no Que-
stions——but, I tell you, the Jest is over——but
Money down! (d'ye observe me) Money down! don't
meddle for Time: for the Time's a coming, when
those that buy will not be able to pay; and so the De-
vil take the hindmost, and Heaven bless you all to-
gether.

Fran. And now, *Sophronia*, let we forward to the
promis'd Land of Love.

Soph. *In vain against the Force of Nature's Law,
Would rigid Morals keep our Hearts in awe;
All our lost Labours of the Brain but prove,
In Life, there's no Philosophy like Love.*



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